

**Towards the inculturation of marriage rituals in the National Baptist
Convention of Zimbabwe: A missiological critique**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that: **“Towards the inculturation of marriage rituals in the National Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe: A missiological critique”** is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature

Date

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ABSTRACT

In this study, I seek to give a missiological critique of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the National Baptist Convention (NBC) of Zimbabwe. I examine and explore the kind of inculturation that could help expedite greater engagement between the NBC of Zimbabwe, on the one hand, and the Shona and Ndebele cultures, on the other hand, in Midlands and Matabeleland regions. To that end, I use missiological research methodologies that include Pastoral Cycles, especially the four phase and the seven-point praxis matrix as propounded, among others, by Kritzing (2010). I apply the latter as a grid of missiological questions. I apply these cycles in a mixed-research approach of quantitative and qualitative paradigms. The case study and descriptive survey are my designs. I chose as my research sample 140 research respondents from six of the thirteen denominations of the Convention in two regions, namely, the Midlands and the Matabeleland. These include National Executive members, pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members and ordinary lay members. Questionnaires, interviews and observations are used as instruments. The findings reveal that marriage rituals are significant to members of the NBC of Zimbabwe. They show how the NBC of Zimbabwe inculturated payment of bride price, ululating, dancing, and guidance and counselling into church practices. Marrying someone whose background is known was also inculturated. Respondents argue that these aspects of culture are biblically commendable and should be retained. However, polygamy, divination and ancestor veneration is rejected. The study further shows that the *kusungira* ritual and conducting marriage rituals in the November month are controversial. However, the inculturation of some aspects of marriage rituals was hindered by fear of syncretism, clash of doctrines and differing views within members of many ethnic tribes in the Convention. The study recommends that the NBC of Zimbabwe should encourage the payment of the bride price, whilst discouraging its abuse and that Church leaders should also handle with sensitivity controversies surrounding payment of the bride price. It also emphasises the preaching and teaching against views that perpetuate patriarchy and subordination of women by men in the church and society and encourages fusion of church and traditional wedding ceremonies.

Key words: Missiology, inculturation, culture, rituals, marriage rituals, marriage, mission, missiological critique, Convention, Constitution.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AICs	African Independent Churches/African Initiated Churches
A-Level	Advanced Level
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AIPCA	African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BCC	Basic Christian Communities
BCom	Bachelor of Commerce
BEd	Bachelor of Education
BSc	Bachelor of Science
CHDC	College Higher Degrees Committee
CREC	College Research Ethics Committee
DHDC	Departmental Higher Degrees Committee
DREC	Departmental Research Ethics Committee
EC	Executive Committee
FABC	Federation of Asian Bishops Conference
GradCE	Graduate Certificate in Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MA	Master of Arts
MBA	Masters in Business Administration
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MEd	Masters of Education
MMR	Mixed Method Research
MSc	Master of Science
NA	National Assembly
NBC	National Baptist Convention
NEC	National Executive Committee
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
O-Level	Ordinary Level

PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
UNISA	University of South Africa
SHDC	Senate Higher Degrees Committee
SPSS	Statistical Package of Social Sciences
SREC	Senate Research Ethics Committee
STIs	Sexual Transmitted Infections
NEC	National Executive Committee
NIV	New International Version
ZJC	Zimbabwe Junior Certificate

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Motivation for the study¹

As a Shona member of the National Baptist Convention (NBC) of Zimbabwe, I² observed tension between church and culture as far as marriage rituals in particular are concerned. Exposing myself to literature by scholars such as Oglivie (2007), Anthony (2012), Kurgat (2009), Magesa (2004), Amadi (2004) and Mwandayi (2011), in which the importance of inculturation is argued at international and national level, I was encouraged to undertake this study at the local level. I had to ask the following questions: What kind of inculturation can facilitate greater engagement of inculturation between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele cultures in the Matabeleland³ and Midlands regions? Which aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture have already been fused into the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals? What could be the driving forces of such a blending? If so, what could be the possible benefits to the Convention members? What are the barriers to the practice of such aspects in the Convention? Finally, how do the respondents perceive the inculturation of marriage rituals in the Convention?

As a researcher, I have also observed that most of the works on inculturation were written either by Roman Catholic scholars or by scholars focusing on the Roman Catholic Church. Outside Africa, many articles have been written as well. Oglivie (2007) has an article termed “Issues in Inculturation and Interreligious Dialogue with reference to the Catholic Church in Asia.” She noted that the mission of the church calls it both to dialogue with people of other faiths and to inculturate its own Good News in the meaning systems of diverse times and places. For this scholar, contemporary Asia, by its very nature, demands inculturation that is interreligious. Furthermore, it demands an approach to inculturation that is informed by the practice of dialogue (Oglivie 2007:1). Such an approach would in turn analyse the dominant theology of inculturation, which focuses on the analogy of the incarnation. Inculturation as dialogue advocates for the paschal mystery, as a more meaningful symbol for the death and transformation that takes place in the

¹This point of entry to the research, methodologically constitutes STEP 1 of the Praxis Cycle, namely Identification or Insertion. Read more about ‘Identification’ in section 1.5. The Praxis Cycle is going to serve as the pivot upon which the entire research will be conducted.

²In this study, I shall make use of the first person narrative since it is the requirement of the Department of Missiology.

³In the thesis, Matabeleland refers to Matabeleland North where I sampled four churches and the Matabeleland South region, where I sampled one church when conducting my research.

encounter between cultures and faiths. As such, I intend to assess the inculturation in marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

Virginia Fabella, a Filipino Maryknoll sister, wrote an article on “Inculturating the Gospel: The Philippine experience” at (www.the.way.org.uk/back/39fabellapdf accessed on 05 August 2014.) According to her the coming of Christianity unquestionably affected the locals’ religiosity and culture even though the extent to which the faith was really comprehended by the converts was questioned. She also declares that religious instructions and sermons were given in the vernacular, but the key vocabulary deemed untranslatable were preserved in Spanish, such as *Dios, Santísima Trinidad, Espiritu Santo, Virgen Cruz and gracia*⁴. Furthermore, many ideas were left to the locals’ thoughts, creating mental associations, “that had only the most tenuous connection to the original message of the priest”. Thus, the new converts inevitably interpreted Christian teaching according to their worldview.

Together with that, Fabella asserts the inhabitants engrossed much of Spain’s piety and symbolism that was forced on them by the colonisers. Being under the Moors for almost eight hundred years, Spain developed a popular religious tradition marked by a deep sense of tragedy. This brand of religiosity was particularly apparent in the popular Spanish image of Christ- a tragic, heart-breaking victim Christ or a dead Christ. Along with that, unlike the Christ of the gospels it is said the Christ of the Spanish folk tradition was either an infant or a dead body⁵. Such a state of affairs motivated me to give a missiological critique of the NBC of Zimbabwe’s inculturation of marriage rituals in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

When it comes to the African continent, I observed that some scholars would discuss inculturation in Africa in general. These included Kurgat (2009), Magesa (2004), Nwachukwu-Udaku (2011), and many others. For instance, Nwachukwu-Udaku (2011), a Roman Catholic, has an article entitled “From Globalisation to Inculturation: A paradigm shifts in negotiating the HIV /AIDS. Dilemma within the framework of Fides et Ratio art, 72”. Nwachukwu-Udaku has emphasized the need for a paradigm shift from the bending and dictating model being stimulated by globalisation, to a paradigm that considers the identity and social context of people (Nwachukwu-Udaku 2011:319). Inculturation as a fresh paradigm with its social and religious repercussions will help to initiate a change of mentality and perceptions among individuals, communities and social

⁴For the ramification of untranslatable terms see Rafael, *Contracting colonialism* especially chapter 1.

⁵ See John Mackay, *The other Spanish Christ*. New York: Macmillan and Co, 1933 p102.

groups with respect to HIV and AIDS. This change in perspective is explicitly important, since HIV and AIDS affect people whose life, narratives and history are situated within a given social and historical context of poverty. This indicates that Nwachukwu-Udaku (2011:319) has discovered that inculturation is significant, especially with issues of HIV and AIDS. This was dealt with by considering the identity and social context of people. Looking closely to the diverse views of scholars on inculturation, I seek to evaluate the prevailing views within the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions relating to the inculturation of marriage rituals as a dimension of missiology.

Along with this, Kurgat (2009) has a paper entitled, “Theology of Inculturation and the African Church”, with emphasis on the Roman Catholic Church, in Kenya. The paper investigates inculturation and the African Church. The study shows that, for an operative inculturation, enablement of active, local participation, motivated and controlled from a bottom-up approach through small Christian communities, has been essential for sustainable inculturation. This methodology has led to fruitful inculturation, particularly in the areas of liturgy, moral theology, African leadership and the Church as a whole as seen by Kurgat (2009:1). Such a scenario provokes me to give a missiological critique of the NBC of Zimbabwe’s inculturation of marriage rituals in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

McGarry (1995:53) cited by Kurgat (2009:90) asserts that Pope John Paul II also insisted without wavering that there is an organic and constitutive link between Christianity and culture, and that “the synthesis between the culture and faith is not just a demand of culture but also faith”. The Pope’s sentiments and the Second Vatican council express the need for inculturation. Along with that, Kurgat (2009:90) asserts that John Pobee (1979) declares that from Vatican II onward, the movement of inculturation has been advocated in many proclamations, Bishops’ Synods, pastoral letters and in books. The inculturation message to most Christian countries in Africa is an important theological message, which was communicated to African churches through the Synods of the African churches addressed by various Popes as shown by Kurgat (2009:90). All this resulted in bringing about dialogue between Christianity and African culture in particular. However, it is important to note that according to Kurgat (2009:90) the impact of inculturation has not been felt in most African churches. This type of scenario has made researchers both in academic circles and in the church to think twice about the role played by the local people in their respective churches to make inculturation a reality. Since the NBC of Zimbabwe is made up of

numerous churches, I find it necessary to analyse my own Convention's inculturation of marriage rituals.

Magesa (2004) wrote a book entitled *The Anatomy of inculturation: Transforming the church in Africa*, focusing on the Catholic Church as well as the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA). From the findings, Magesa (2004:10) observed that all Catholic Church officials seem to have the same perception of the meaning of the term "inculturation" as well as its process. Magesa noted that it mixes the Christian doctrines with "useful" African traditional cultural values and a modern way of life. For Catholic Church officials the objective of inculturation is to make Christianity a religion that is acceptable to all. Magesa (2004:10) also perceived that this was taking place as shown by part of the group who gave a yes to the answer. The Church officials pointed to elements of singing, clapping of hands and the beating of drums in the liturgy. They also indicated that shapes of some Christian symbols such as crucifixes, alters, and tabernacles are even taking a more cultural outlook. Many more aspects like increased emphasis on chastity before marriage, in Christian preaching were highlighted. However, a smaller group of officials indicated that inculturation was not taking place at all. This group complained about the "foreign ways" in which Christianity is expressed in Africa.

Together with this, Magesa (2004:13) found that a small group of young respondents expressed their conviction that inculturation was unnecessary. For this group, both Africa and Christianity must change with times. Magesa (2004:14) also discovered that generally the ordinary members of AIPCA, like their Catholic counterparts, found it difficult to explain the term "inculturation" conceptually. They wondered why they needed to engage in such a process, since their church was already African as its name indicated. Together with that, the respondents made it clear that for most AICs inculturation involves understanding the biblical teachings within the context of African culture. At modern institutions like churches and schools, inculturation must be adapted to the customs, beliefs and social institutions of the particular group or people. From the above discussion, I note that according to Magesa (2004) some respondents in Kenya are of the opinion that inculturation has occurred, whilst others have a different idea. This then triggers me, to give a critique of the NBC of Zimbabwe's inculturation of marriage rituals focusing on Shona and Ndebele cultures.

Parratt (2000) discusses the issue of Christianity in new contexts. He discusses the interaction of Christianity and Hinduism in Bengal, and its interaction with African Christians in Botswana as

well. For him the Indian case is about how old culture is altered by new religion but the Botswana case is about how new religion can be altered by old culture. Given such situations in Asia, Botswana and Bengal, I seek to examine the missiology of inculturation in the NBC of Zimbabwe concentrating on the marriage rituals with reference to Shona and Ndebele cultures.

As said before, a number of articles, journals and books that have been written so far in Zimbabwe, a number seem to be concentrating on the Roman Catholic Church. For instance, Gundani (2000) has an article entitled “Christology in the inculturated Shona Burial”. This article discusses the area of inculturation on Shona Catholic Church with the objective of investigating the place given to Christ. From the research Gundani (2000: 91) discovered that Christ is exhibited as “the life and resurrection” and “the way to the Father”. Christ is shown as the liberator who leads the departed out of the world of impermanence to everlasting life. Above all, one also gets the notion that Christ is the ultimate Victor (*Christus Victor*), since he is referred to as the one who can save the dead from the fires of hell and even has the ability to cleanse the departed of his or her sins. Having noted this, I give a critique of the NBC of Zimbabwe in line with the inculturation of marriage rituals.

Amadi (2008) has another article called “Inculturating the Eucharist in Zimbabwe”, in which he explores possible ways of making the Eucharist celebration meaningful to the Catholics in Mutare. Some of these ways included symbolic gestures, local languages, proverbs, local staple food, and invocation of ancestors to mention but a few.

Mwandayi (2011) has a thesis article called “Death and after life rituals in the eyes of the Shona: Dialogue with Shona customs in the quest for authentic inculturation”. He examines the burial customs and rituals among the Shona. He actually observes a definite pattern comparable to the Judeo-Christian practices. Mwandayi (2011:1) contends that these practices among the Shona are a preparation for the Gospel of Christ. Vatican II would identify the occurrences as “*preparatio evangelica*”. Mwandayi (2011:1) posits that the early missionaries did not make full use of this preparation, which would have laid a foundation for the fullness of the Gospel message they brought. Instead, some missionaries sought to destroy the foundation instead of building on it. Since these scholars seem to be concentrating on the Roman Catholic Church, I wish to assess critically Zimbabwe’s inculturation of marriage rituals in line with Shona and Ndebele cultures.

On the other hand, Shoko (2009) wrote an article on “Komba Girls’ Initiation Rites and Inculturation among the Varembe of Zimbabwe”. According to Shoko (2009:1), “The Komba rite

is intended to move a mature girl (*mhandara*) from the state of girlhood to that of womanhood. It is also meant to initiate Vashenji (uncircumcised non-Varemba) women who marry Varemba men into their female traditions and customs...”. Still on the Shona-Karanga ethnic group in Zimbabwe, the Varemba boys (*majaha*) are circumcised during the *murundu* initiation rite. In this ritual, elderly men of the Varemba group are appointed to lead such rites. As observed by Shoko (2009:1) this is conducted in the months of June and July. Like the girls, the boys are initiated from the state of boyhood to that of manhood. This happens when the boys are withdrawn from other people to live in a forest in the mountains far away from the villages. The initiates are also taught traditional education, various skills of hunting, dancing and war. They are even trained on how to be productive and supportive of the family. Thus through the initiation rites the Varemba boys are introduced to the art of communal living. The mature Varemba boys and girls are also permitted to share in the full privileges and duties of the community. They then enter into a state of responsibility.

I would like to note that in the abstract Shoko (2009) points out that while Christianity despised this rite as “paganism” and not acceptable to its faith, the Varemba Christians practise it in good faith. As such, the article explores the relationship of the Komba ritual to some Catholic Church sacraments. By so doing, the article even endeavours to address the problem of whether the rite can be accommodated into Catholic sacraments like baptism, confirmation and matrimony, and argues for the inculturation of the Komba rite. No studies have been made on this phenomenon in the NBC of Zimbabwe. In the light of this, as a researcher I make an academic study from within as an academic member, focusing on inculturation in relation to marriage rituals.

In addition to this, the study on the missiological critique of inculturation in the NBC of Zimbabwe in relation to marriage rituals may benefit a variety of people ranging from policy-makers to policy implementers. It also assists policy evaluators, pastors, elders, deacons and the lay. Students and other future researchers are likely to benefit. I intend to contribute through this research study as follows:

1. To come up with a type of inculturation that expedites greater engagement of inculturation between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele cultures.
2. To come up with research models and theories on how Christian culture can be linked to the African traditional culture of the Shona and Ndebele people in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

3. To enable the African Christians in the NBC of Zimbabwe to understand faith from their own perspectives and language.
4. To bring out benefits that would result from inculturation in the Convention.
5. To unearth the nature of inculturation outside the Roman Catholic Church with reference to the NBC of Zimbabwe.
6. To determine whether it is the African traditional culture of the Shona and Ndebele societies, which is Christianised or vice versa.
7. To bring out new ideas and solutions to the problems of the inculturation of marriage rituals in this Convention.

These findings and recommendations can then be used in pastoral ministry to equip Convention leaders like National Executive committee members, pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members and the lay to deal with inculturation.

I have chosen marriage rituals because most of the works on inculturation have been focusing on Roman Catholic Church concentrating areas like death, burial and afterlife rituals e.g. Gundani (2000) and Mwandayi (2011). Shoko (2009) focused on Komba Girls and initiation rites among the Varembe of Zimbabwe, Nwachukwu-Udaku (2011) concentrated on HIV and AIDS. Amadi (2008) has another article termed “Inculturating the Eucharist in Zimbabwe”, in which he explores possible methods of making the Eucharist commemoration meaningful to the Catholics in Mutare.

In this paragraph, I have sketched the background that should provide the base and direction of this research. It is very clear that we are dealing with a phenomenon that cannot be ignored. Therefore, to understand the contours and the extent to which this topic may be researched, it is necessary to formulate a problem statement. In the next paragraph, I define what the statement of a problem is and the key issues this study raises that need to be investigated.

1.2 Statement of the problem

I have discussed in the previous section my motivation for the study. My exposure to the importance of inculturation as highlighted by scholars like Anthony (2012), Nwachukwu-Udaku (2011), Kurgat (2009), Oglivie (2007), Magesa (2004) and Amadi (2004), at global and continental levels, prompted me to undertake this study at local level. I have been motivated to investigate the possibility of inculturation that could help facilitate greater engagement between the NBC of

Zimbabwe on the one hand, and the Shona and the Ndebele cultures on the other, in both the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. I have further been prompted to investigate which Shona and Ndebele practices of marriage rituals have been fused into the Convention's marriage rituals. What could be the driving forces? What then could be the possible benefits? What could be the constraints? How do the respondents perceive the inculturation of marriage rituals in the Convention? I have observed that either Roman Catholics have written most of the works on inculturation or that most of the scholars have focused on the Roman Catholic Church. These include writers like Mwandayi (2011), Shoko (2009), Amadi (2008), Gundani (2000), and Maryknoll Sister Virginia Fabella Filipino Mary Knoll sister (www.the.way.org.uk/back/39fabellapdf).

It is my opinion that inculturation from a Christian and especially a Roman Catholic theological perspective is perceived as a process in which the faith embodied in one culture encounters another culture (Magesa 2004:5). In the case of the NBC of Zimbabwe, it is the Christian faith message encountering African traditional culture in the form of the Shona and Ndebele cultures, becoming part of a new culture. The Christian culture in this case inculturate the Shona and Ndebele marriage rituals. The research questions arise: How does inculturation work between Christian and traditional Shona and Ndebele cultures? Is there conflict inherent to this inculturation? What form does this conflict take? Does it lead to deculturation? This kind of encounter is likely to bring a conflict of cultures. It brings deculturation as well. Two cultures, namely, one based on Christian faith and practice, on the one hand, and the other, based on Shona and Ndebele religious and traditional practices can be harmonised in conducting marriage rituals in the Convention. In many church formations, African traditional practices and the Christian faith are mutually exclusive. This divides personal allegiance of church members between culture and faith. It divides members of the same families into opposing camps, since it is an inherent problem to individual peace and sanity, and it is a problem for social harmony and cohesion.

It is very clear that this study exposes a problem that needs to be investigated. To begin with, the research problem that will be investigated is: What are the challenges facing the inculturation of marriage practices, specifically in the NBC of Zimbabwe with special reference to the Shona and Ndebele cultures in Midlands and Matabeleland? The next paragraph presents an opportunity to delve into the problem by posing specific questions. It is based on carefully crafted relevant and scientific questions so that I can deconstruct the problem and arrive at tenable explanations.

Hence, my next paragraph is about the research questions vis-à-vis the seven dimensions of the praxis matrix of Kritzinger as cited by Banda (2010:128).

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions are used to unlock the main study. They are based on Kritzinger as highlighted by Banda (2010:128)

- 1) Agency:** Who are the agents/leaders who work towards inculturation? What is their position vis-à-vis the rest of the NBC of Zimbabwe? What are their views on inculturation?
- 2) Contextual understanding:** What are the factors that influence the agents and the society/church members who are affected by this inculturation? What is the context of the members of the NBC of Zimbabwe as Shonas and Ndebeles? How do the respondents perceive inculturation in the Convention from their context?
- 3) Ecclesial scrutiny:** What are/were the marriage practices in the churches? What kind of inculturation could help facilitate greater engagement between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and the Ndebele cultures? What are the barriers to the practice of such aspects in the Convention?
- 4) Biblical tradition:** How do the leaders and the members interpret the Bible vis-à-vis marriage practices? What would be an appropriate spirituality for inculturating marriage practices?
- 5) Discernment for action:** What actions are taken to inculturate marriage practices? What causes the blending of these practices in this Convention?
- 6) Reflexivity:** Is there any reflection from leaders and members on the impact of the inculturation of marriage practices? What are some of the aspects of Shona and Ndebele cultures that have been fused in the NBC of Zimbabwe? Which are the possible benefits of these aspects to the Convention members?
- 7) Spirituality:** What type of spirituality is practised by the leaders/members that underscore the inculturation of the marriage rituals?

Having delineated the research questions in this section, I examine the purpose and objectives of the research study.

1.4 Purpose and objectives of the study

This research study focuses on inculturation of marriage rituals, giving a critique of the NBC of Zimbabwe. In this case, I endeavour to interrogate and explore the models of inculturation that could help facilitate its greater engagement between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele cultures in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. The purpose of the study is to analyse the NBC of Zimbabwe, concentrating on inculturation in marriage rituals by making an inquiry into the following:

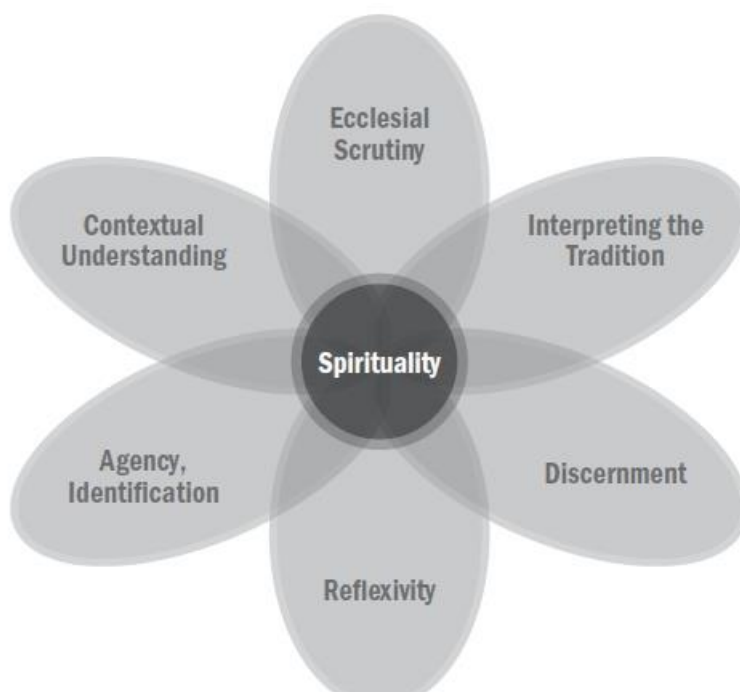
- The religious and traditional orientations of agents/leaders who work towards inculturation and their position of responsibility vis-à-vis the rest of the NBC of Zimbabwe and their views on inculturation (**Agency**);
- The factors that influence the agents and the society/church members who are affected by this inculturation, the context of the members of the NBC of Zimbabwe as Shonas and Ndebeles and the perceptions of respondents on inculturation in the Convention in their context (**Contextual understanding**);
- The marriage practices that were/are in the churches, barriers to the practice of such aspects in the Convention and the kind of inculturation that could facilitate greater engagement between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and the Ndebele cultures (**Ecclesial scrutiny**);
- The leaders and the members' interpretation of the Bible vis-à-vis marriage practices and the appropriate spirituality for inculturating marriage practices (**Biblical tradition**);
- The actions taken to inculturate marriage practices and the causes of the blending of these practices in this Convention (**Discernment for action**);
- The reflections from leaders and members on the impact of the inculturation of marriage practices. The aspects of Shona and Ndebele cultures that have been fused in the NBC of Zimbabwe. The possible benefits of these aspects to the Convention members (**Reflexivity**); and
- The type of spirituality practised by the leaders/members that underscores the inculturation of the marriage rituals (**Spirituality**)

Having outlined the purpose and objectives of the study, the next segment presents an opportunity to scrutinise the research methods to be used in the study. This study is an explicitly multifaceted one.

1.5 Research methods

In this study, I use several methodologies that are used in missiological studies. In this case the four phase Pastoral Cycle shall be integrated with the seven-point pastoral cycle as propounded by Kritzinger (2010). I would like to point out that the seven-point pastoral cycle as propounded by Kritzinger (2010) will be applied as the grid or framework for the missiological questions. Below is the diagram of the seven-dimension pastoral cycle.

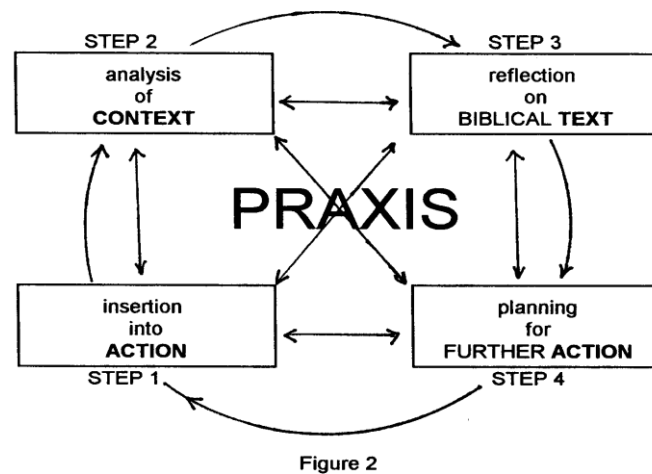
Figure 1 Kritzinger’s seven-point “praxis matrix” (cited by Banda 2010: 128)



This “praxis matrix” developed by Kritzinger cited by Banda (2010:128) is what I have applied to the research question. The main aspects of the matrix are 1) Agency 2) Contextual understanding 3) Ecclesial scrutiny 4) Theological interpretation 5) Strategic planning 6) Reflexivity with 7) Spirituality at the centre. Kritzinger and others have applied it as a methodological framework and in this research study I use it as the framework for the missiological questions.

I also use the four phase Pastoral Cycle. According to the MTh Tutorial letter MTHMS/15/101/2010 of Unisa, this kind of Cycle can equally well be called cycle of missionary praxis. Figure 2 below shows the Pastoral Cycle as developed by the missiology department at UNISA.

Figure 2: Four phase Pastoral Cycle taken from Tutorial letter 101/0/2014 on Research in Missiology page 12



In the research study, I apply the above Pastoral Cycle in Figure 2. I do this since, according to the contextual approach to theology, the first step in doing theology is insertion. In that first step, there is practical involvement in Christian praxis for the Kingdom of God.

My second action is Context analysis. In that step, I make a careful use of analytical tools to reveal the fundamental dynamics at work in a particular situation or context. The third step is the theological reflection on the situation, which includes the church. In this third step there is a re-reading of the Bible and the Christian tradition in answer to the questions raised by insertion and context analysis. Commenting on this aspect the MTh Tutorial Letter MTHMS15/101/2010 says,

This dimension of doing theology is sometimes regarded as the only “real” theology, but a contextual approach argues that it is only one dimension of a fourfold process of theologising, which can easily become distorted if it is not studied in relation to the other three dimensions of this circular process.

The fourth and final step is planning for further action, which can be regarded as the Strategies for Mission characterised by scheduling for further accomplishment. This fourth stage completes the circle since it leads back to insertion. This final stage underlines the view of contextual theology that theology should not be abstract theories, which are of no earthly use to God’s people. This kind of theology should point the way for the people of God as they as they worship and struggle to be faithful to the Gospel on a daily basis.

The clockwise movement around the circle shown by the curved arrows, which portrays the inner logic of this approach to theology, does not necessarily imply a sequential link between these elements. According to MTh Tutorial Letter MTHMS15/101/2010 there is no one-way movement from insertion, to analysis, to reflection, to planning. The four steps of the method should rather be viewed as the four aspects of management.

I will cover the above phases in the chapters of my thesis:

- Chapter 1 covers identification / insertion.
- Chapters 2, 3 and 4 cover context analysis.
- Chapter 5 covers theological reflection.
- Chapters 6 and 7 cover strategies for Mission.

I will also make use of the following methodologies

- Qualitative and quantitative evaluations;
- A phenomenological research will be conducted which will involve a survey;
- In support of the above, historical and theological approaches will be used to determine the inculturation of marriage rituals.

I will use both qualitative and quantitative evaluations of the research data. Quantitative research is linked to positivism, where reality is seen as stable, observable and measurable (Creswell 2010:39). Quantitative research seeks contributory determination, prediction, and generality of findings. It actually focuses on collecting numeric data, which is then scrutinised statistically. Some researchers are of the opinion that qualitative and quantitative research approaches can be excellently combined in the same research study, for example Strauss and Corbin (1990:67) and Patton (1990:34). Caruth (2013:112) denotes quantitative researchers as positivists and qualitative researchers have been referred to as hermeneutists. Thus, quantitative data may be utilised in a way that supports or expands upon qualitative data and effectively deepens understanding.

In this study, I use the quantitative methods so that I will be able to describe, explain and predict the phenomenon of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. Quantitative research is based on pre-determined variables and research questions, which I investigate independently. In this study, variables include dependent variables and independent variables. Data collected through quantitative research is objective and is obtained through structured questionnaires. This ensures a high degree of reliability of the results.

Qualitative research, on the other hand, is based on an interpretive paradigm. Interpretive approaches to research have the purpose of understanding the world of human experience (Cohen and Manion 1994:36). This suggests that reality is socially constructed as propounded by Mertens (2005:12). Creswell (2010:38) asserts that the interpretive researcher relies on the participants' views of the situation under study and takes cognisance of the impact on the research of their own experiences. Creswell (2010:38) goes on to say that, the interpretive researcher mostly relies on qualitative data collection methods and analysis, or a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. In this study, I use qualitative methods to adequately describe or interpret a situation in relation to the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

I therefore use both quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to triangulate data. This mixture of methods makes it possible to understand the research problem and tackle it from any relevant angle, while using only one methodology does not provide all the information required (Castro, Kellison, Boyd and Kopak 2010:343). Mixed methods research offers the best of both worlds: the in-depth, contextualised, and natural but more time-consuming insights of qualitative research coupled with the more efficient but less rich or compelling predictive power of quantitative research (Stange, Crabtree and Miller 2002:293). Creswell and Plano (2007:39) contend that mixed-methods research helps answer questions that cannot be answered by qualitative or quantitative approaches alone.

Caruth (2013, 113) notes that Lund (2012) believed that Mixed Methods Research (MMR) was established around 2000, goes on to say that this type of research has become increasingly accepted by researchers. Caruth (2013:113) also postulates that Mixed Method Research defined "...as a method of both quantitative and qualitative designs in the same research study evolved in response to the observed limitations of both quantitative and qualitative designs...". I therefore believe that this method is most appropriate for this study.

Cronbach (2013:545) views qualitative and quantitative data as intimately connected to each other, and believes that quantitative data is based on qualitative judgments; and qualitative data can be described and manipulated numerically. The two approaches are thus far more comprehensive than attacking a problem from only one point of view. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:401) who declare that using both approaches permits the researcher to integrate the strengths of each method echo the view of Creswell and Clark. Thus, their use in this study is quite appropriate.

I also use the phenomenological, theological and historical methods. These methods are used for complementary purposes to determine the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. For Leedy and Omrod (2010:141) a phenomenological study is one that endeavours to comprehend people's perceptions, perspectives and comprehension of a particular context. Cox (1992:24) defines phenomenology of religion as "... a method adapting the procedures of *epoche* and eidetic intuition to the study of the varied symbolic expressions of that which people appropriately respond to as being of unrestricted value to them...". This method is an orderly study the religious phenomena as they appear, setting aside all assumptions about the truth or falsity of specific beliefs as seen by some scholars. When using the phenomenological method, I commence by putting into suspension my previous ideas, thoughts, opinions or beliefs on the inculturation of marriage rituals. This is done because in the research study there is need for accurate descriptions and respect for the object of study. This means my main objective is to bracket out all questions of evaluation, interpretations and speculations on the research study on inculturation of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Thus, I refrain from imposing value judgements and seek an 'objective' interrogative method of gaining facts on this research study.

When applying some aspects of the phenomenological method I endeavour to describe and examine the significance of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe without evaluating them from philosophical, theological or historical point of view. I take such a stance because W. Brede Kristensen (cited Platvoet 1990:34) says, "Let us not forget there exists no other religious reality than the faith of the believer." I do all this because in this research study on the missiological critique of the inculturation of marriage rituals there is need for accurate descriptions and respect for the object of study. I do that because what the adherents of the NBC of Zimbabwe know directly and perfectly I can only know them indirectly and approximately.

However, I would like to note that the phenomenological method that I use, like other methods of research, has its limitations. For instance, to be objective is at times rather very difficult because I may enter into the research with some preconceived ideas and notions since it is rather difficult to suspend all. At times, I may know ahead of time what I wish to get and only have to find a method to get it. As such, I use the phenomenological method with caution since no 'pure' descriptions of the phenomena separable from the subjective observer are attainable.

Moreover, at times it is rather difficult to be quite objective in studying a particular group of people such as the NBC of Zimbabwe. This is because at certain times what one expresses outwardly

could be markedly different from one's intrinsic beliefs. Although the method has a weakness, it is one of the best ways of accessing the beliefs of the NBC of Zimbabwe.

The historical method is a technique of presenting information in which the topic is considered in its earliest phases. Allen (1987) contends that all religious data are historical; no phenomena can be understood outside their history. In this case, I focus on the growth and development of inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe because of the need for specific historical, cultural, and socio-economic contexts within which the religious phenomena appear.

Above all, I use the theological method, because the Christian spiritual life belongs to the supernatural order as a life of grace and virtues. The science of theology gathers knowledge through causes and deduces conclusions from principles (www.thesumma.infor/one/one20.php).

In the foregoing paragraphs, I have examined the research approaches that I use in this research study. I have scrutinised the use of the phenomenological, historical, and theological as well as the method designed by Kritzingner as cited by Banda (2010, 128) at UNISA in the Department of Missiology. I have observed that the phenomenological method has strengths and weaknesses like other research methods. Having analysed the research method in the foregoing paragraphs in the next segment I describe the research design.

1.6 Research Design

In this research study, I will make use of case study design, which is combined with a descriptive survey as well. This then strongly aids in determining the kind of inculturation that could facilitate greater engagement of inculturation between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele cultures. A mixed method research paradigm, which systematically combines ideas from both quantitative and qualitative research, is used. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011:11), Tashakkori and Creswell (2007b:4) "...Mixed methods research is defined as research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in a single study or programme...".

In using the mixed methods in this study on assessment of the inculturation of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe, I will use data collection tools and analysis of quantitative and qualitative approaches, combine the findings, and then draw conclusions using both methods in that study.

How is this done? One might argue that using quantitative research only in assessing inculturation in the NBC of Zimbabwe is weak in understating the context in which the respondents will be speaking. In addition, the voices of the participants are only indirectly heard when using quantitative research. Such weaknesses can be overcome by using qualitative research as well. Questionnaires, observation, and interviews are therefore used in this study of assessing inculturation in line with marriage rituals in this Convention.

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, 13) using mixed method research is “practical” in the sense that the researcher has the freedom to implement all the methods possible to address the research question. For example, I can combine methods from qualitative and quantitative methods like the descriptive survey, experimental or quasi-experimental method. This is “practical” because the individuals have the tendency to solve problems using both numbers and words, and even combine inductive and deductive type of thinking.

Johnson and Christensen (2010:444) observe that using mixed methods has the strength of employing words, pictures and narrative to add meaning to numbers. Numbers can be used to add precision to words, pictures and narrative. In this case, statistical data is analysed using the mean, mode and standard deviation. Numerical figures are extensively used since the research is both qualitative and quantitative. The thematic approach is used to analyse data collected through open-ended responses to questionnaires and interviews. Having discussed the research design here above, in the next section I proceed to deliberate on research techniques.

1.7 Research techniques

1.7.1 Research instruments

To achieve the required aspects of a phenomenological research method, I conduct a survey using questionnaires, observations and interviews, whose results I present in Chapter 4, Data presentation and analysis of conducted survey. These research instruments like observations, questionnaires and interviews are employed for data collection to determine the inculturation of marriage rituals. An interview schedule has been designed as well. Leedy (1993:25) defines research instruments as “...tools to help researchers to achieve their goals in carrying out their plans...”. I alternate between participant and non-participant observations. An observation sheet is used to guide the research.

I also use a sequential design. In the first stage, the quantitative data is collected through questionnaires. See **Appendix 1** for the questionnaire on Shona culture and **Appendix 2** for the Questionnaire on Ndebele culture. In this case, participant and non-participant observation is continuous and overlaps the two stages. This is through a survey design. Johnson and Christensen (2008, 203) describe a questionnaire as “... a self-report data collection instrument that each participant fills out as part of the research study...”. In this study, I use the questionnaire to get information about thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions, personality and behavioural intentions of the African Christians of NBC of Zimbabwe in connection with the inculturation of marriage rituals. One hundred and twenty-five questionnaires were given to participants. Fifty of the questionnaires would be filled in with my assistance where necessary.

Using questionnaires has many advantages. Phellas, Bloch and Seale (2011:184) note that questionnaires are cheaper to administer. For instance, when assessing the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe, the only costs that I incur when using self-completion questionnaires in this research study are those associated with the printing or designing the questionnaire and the postage.

The other advantage of using self-completion questionnaires is that they permit a greater geographical coverage, without incurring additional costs of time and travel (Phellas, Bloch and Seale 2011:184). Their use is quite helpful since the population of the NBC of Zimbabwe is geographically dispersed in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

In addition to this, absence of an interviewer provides greater anonymity for the respondents (Phellas, Bloch and Seale 2011:184). When the topic of the research is sensitive or personal the questionnaire can increase the reliability of the responses. In this study, I assure the respondents of the NBC of Zimbabwe anonymity.

In the second stage, qualitative data is collected through interviews. See **Appendix 3** for the interview guide on Shona culture and **Appendix 4** for the interview guide on Ndebele culture. In this study, fifteen interviewees had to be contacted. Both formal and informal interviews are used to gain access to what is in the people’s minds in connection with the marriage rituals. Johnson and Christensen (2008:203) assert “... an interview is a data collection method in which an interviewer, asks questions from an interviewee...”. In this case, face-to-face interviews are used since they have many benefits. Interviews are preferred, for I can freely use probes (Johnson and Christensen 2008:203). Through interviews I was even able to access the thoughts and the value

attached to them. As mentioned before, the interviewees are drawn from those in leadership positions, such as pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members and some members of the National Executive Committee. Members of the lay people were also interviewed.

Face-to-face interviews have the advantage that as an interviewer I can control the context and the environment in which the interview is taking place (Phellas, Bloch and Seale 2011:183). However, the interviewees also co-determine this environment to some extent. As an interviewer I make sure that all the questions have been asked and answered in the correct order expected. The questions are on the nature, causes, benefits and constraints of inculturation in the NBC of Zimbabwe. I have to ensure that the interview takes place in an appropriate setting, which is conducive to accurate responses.

The presence of an interviewer allows complex questions to be explained if necessary to the interviewee (Phellas, Bloch and Seale 2011:184). In analysing inculturation in the NBC of Zimbabwe, face-to-face interviews help me clarify certain questions put to the National Executive members, pastors, elders, deacons, and church committee members as well as to the lay members.

Face-to-face interviews have the distinct advantage of enabling me to establish a good rapport with the potential participants and therefore gain their cooperation (Leedy and Omrod 2010:148). Thus using interviews in this research study yields the highest response rates. This means the percentage of people who agree to participate on the evaluation of inculturation is very high. However, the time and the costs involved is a deterrent factor if the needed interviewees reside in a variety of provinces like the Midlands and Matabeleland Regions.

The interview data was audio-recorded. Analysis will then lead to data coding. The data is collected within thirty to forty minutes. There is also negative case analysis in the interview. This is the process whereby the data collected through interviews is verified through other interviewees who were not among the interviewees but are considered information rich. As I mentioned before participant and non-participant observation is continuous as well.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008:211), observation "...is the watching of behaviour patterns of people in certain situations to obtain the phenomenon of interest...". In using participant observation when critically analysing the inculturation of marriage rituals, I will be able to learn about the activities of African Christians in this Convention in their natural setting through observing and being involved in religious practices.

Stage three is data integration. The data from quantitative, qualitative and observations are mixed. Data is then thoroughly analysed. Therefore, in this research study the sequential approach to be applied was **QUALI + quanti**, and combined with some observation techniques. Diagrammatically the stages to be followed can be represented by table 1.1 below.

Table 1:1 stages followed when using research techniques

Stage	Type of data to be generated	Number of participants	Instruments used
1	Quantitative data	125	Questionnaires and observation
2	Qualitative data	15	Interviews and observation
3	Mixed: Quantitative and qualitative data	140	Questionnaires, interviews and observation

Having outlined the research techniques to be employed, in the next section I discuss the research population and sampling.

1.7.2 Demography

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008:224), a population, sometimes called a target population, is a set of all people involved. Babbie (2007:190) defines it as the “... theoretically specified aggregation of the study elements...”. It is the large group, which I want to generalise my sample results. This is the group from which I am interested in gaining information and drawing conclusions on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. The population of this research study is therefore a collection of all members of the Convention congregations that are well established in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the highlighted regions. This covers Gwanda, Bulawayo, Victoria Falls and Gweru areas. The population was made up members of thirteen churches within these regions situated in rural and urban areas. All pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members, the National Executive Committee members and even the ordinary congregants of the Convention are covered. In the next section, I examine the sample of the study.

1.7.3 Sample

Johnson and Christensen (2008:223) define a sample as a set of elements taken from a larger population according to certain rules. I chose as my research sample 140 research respondents from six of the thirteen denominations of the Convention in two regions, namely, the Midlands and the Matabeleland. From these six churches eight National Executive members, six pastors, twelve elders, eighteen deacons, eighteen church committee members and seventy-eight lay members are selected. This indicates that the sample is the selected set of people drawn from the larger population. In this research, members are taken from six established churches from the larger group of the NBC of Zimbabwe. These are composed of one church from Gwanda, four from Bulawayo and one from Gweru. A simple purposive sampling technique is used to select the pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members and the National Executive members who assist in determining the type of inculturation that could help enable greater engagement of inculturation between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele cultures. I used the random sampling procedure to select the lay members who take part in the research study.

For Johnson and Christensen (2008:239), when making use of purposive sampling, the researcher has to specify the qualities of the population of interest and then attempt to locate individuals who have those qualities. According to Babbie (2007:184) purposive (judgemental) sampling is “A type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher’s judgement about which ones will be the most useful or representative...”. In the study, the participants are members in leadership positions like pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members. Some members of the National Executive Committee, the directorate, are also part of the sample. In this case, certain variables like positions of the leaders in the church are considered, this is not considered when choosing the lay participants. The issue of age is considered. Those aged between 20 and 79 years are taken. Gender is taken into account as well since culture among Black African people, in at least Southern Africa are strongly “arranged” according to gender roles and hierarchies between genders and different age groups. This is done because this has significant impact on how women and men perceive culture as it interacts religion. I had to seek for ethical permission from the participants.

As a researcher, I am bound by rules of ethics. All my research participants must give their permission to be part of the study. I provided them with everything they needed to know about the study to make an informed decision about participating in my research. The participants signed an

informed consent form as well. This is in line with what was posited by Siegle (2017). See **Appendix 12** for this form.

The numbers of respondents are as follows:

Number of respondents	Total
1 Pastor from each of the six different churches	6
2 Elders from each of the six different churches	12
3 Deacons from each of the six different churches	18
3 Committee members from each of the six churches	18
13 Lay members from each of the six different churches	78
8 National Executive Members	8
Total number of respondents	140

1.7.4 Data collection and analysis

1.7.4.1 Data collection procedures

Prior to carrying out the study, I sought permission from the National Executive Committee of the NBC of Zimbabwe and other responsible authorities to collect data from the pastors, elders, deacons, committee members and the lay members legitimately. See **Appendix 5**, which has the letter for seeking permission. See **Appendix 10** for Letter from the Executive office granting permission. Moreover, I have received ethical clearance from University of South Africa (UNISA) authorising me to conduct the research on inculturation of marriage rituals. See **Appendix 8**, which shows the ethical clearance letter from UNISA. In this case, I first submitted a summary sheet for the ethical clearance to the college of Human Sciences. See **Appendix 6**, which is the summary sheet. The Higher Degrees Committees⁶ has commented on the methodological, technical and ethical soundness of the proposal and has given permission for the questionnaires and the interview

⁶ These are in the plural since there are Departmental Higher Degrees Committees (DHDC), followed by College Higher Degrees Committee (CHDC) and the Senate Higher Degrees Committee (SHDC). In the same manner, there are Ethics Committees, viz Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC), College Research Ethics Committee (CREC) and Senate Research Ethics Committee (SREC)

guide to be used for data collection in the study. All ethical considerations were followed in collecting data.

1.7.4.2 Data analysis

Data has to be analysed otherwise it does not serve any purpose. I analyse data in the form of statistical data. Numerical figures are used since the research study is both qualitative and quantitative. In analysing data, thick narrative descriptions are used to analyse data collected through open-ended responses from questionnaires, interviews and observations. I use the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23-computer program to analyse quantitative data, whilst I use MS Word for transcriptions of the qualitative data. Analysis is in terms of the four phases of the praxis matrix. It is thematic and evaluative.

1.7.5 Data presentation procedures

Certain procedures have to be undertaken in order to make data presentable. Data is presented in different forms. Percentages, frequencies, pie charts and tables are used. Presenting data in this manner makes it clear and easy to interpret and compare. However, it may be difficult task to measure elusive factors like attitude and beliefs shown by open-ended responses.

Having explicitly outlined the research techniques, in the next section I focus on the delimitations since the boundaries of the research study are to be clearly spelt out as well.

1.8 Delimitations

This study on the missiological critique of marriage rituals will concern only the churches of the NBC of Zimbabwe, which are located in the Matabeleland⁷ and Midlands regions, giving a missiological critique. By concentrating on a small section, I avoid hasty conclusions and unproductive generalisations. See the political map of Zimbabwe showing Midlands and Matabeleland regions where the population and sample of the study were taken.

⁷Matabeleland is regarded as Matabeleland North and South on the political map on Figure 3.

Figure 3 Political Map of Zimbabwe showing Matabeleland North and South as well as the Midlands regions where the research population and sample were taken. (Source: www.google.com/search accessed 30 April 2016).



In this study, I focus mainly on the Shona and Ndebele cultures, leaving out the Kalanga, Venda, and Shangaan, Sotho, Venda or Chewa cultures. I have selected the Shona and Ndebele cultures since the Shona and Ndebele people form a sizeable percentage compared to that of the other ethnic groups⁸. I focus on the Shona and Ndebele cultures in view of the proportion of such people in the population of Zimbabwe.

In the next paragraph, I delineate the limitations of the study. The methods of overcoming the constraints are given as well.

⁸ New Zimbabwe. Com says, "According to government statistics, the Shona ethnic group made 82% of the population, Ndebele 14%, Whites and Asians less than 1% and other ethnic and racial groups 3%".

1.9 Limitations of the study

A number of limitations affect my research study on the inculturation of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe. Because I am full-time principal lecturer, time is not available, so I have to use my vacation leave days and special leave days to conduct it.

In addition, some church participants might not speak their minds as I expect. This is probably because some respondents decide to release information of what they think I will be interested in knowing, which at times may not be the truth of what transpires within the given Convention. Because of this, I have to encourage them to be as honest as possible.

Power cuts are another hindrance. This can also affect data analysis. Therefore, I have to source a generator to be on standby.

There are also financial constraints. The research study needs a lot of money for tuition fees, printing and photocopying questionnaires and interview guides as well as travel expenses when administering questionnaires, interviews and observations. Finance is needed for producing the draft and final copies of the thesis. Language editing also needs money. To overcome this, I have to ensure that I have saved some money to cater for this. I have also to seek financial assistance from scholarships and bursaries.

Distance to be covered between the churches in Midlands and Matabeleland regions is another hindrance. I have to use public transport, which will not inconvenience me. Transport problems are also solved by using reliable and convenient transport.

Above all, a researcher-respondent relation is also a limiting factor. To avoid a lot of suspicion, I got an introductory letter from the University of South Africa (UNISA), which introduced me to the Council of Churches and National Executive Committee of NBC of Zimbabwe so that I would conduct the research comfortably. Together with this, I am making an academic study from within since I am a member of the NBC of Zimbabwe. Having discussed the limitations, the next section focuses on the assumptions of the study. This will be done because they are important as well in this study.

1.10 Assumptions of the study

My research study will be guided by the following assumptions. I considered these factors when I selected a research population.

1. The NBC of Zimbabwe, the National Executive office shall permit the churches to participate in the study. (**See Appendix 10:** Letter from the Executive office granting permission).
2. The National Executive Committee members, pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members and lay members would be willing to participate in the study and give sincere and honest responses.
3. The selected assemblies form a representative sample of all the churches in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions to enable the research findings to be generalizable to all the churches in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.
4. The participants are literate enough to respond to the questions asked by the questionnaires.

From the foregoing section, I have noted that this study will be guided by numerous assumptions. In the next section, I summarise the literature reviewed.

1.11 Summary of Review of Literature

I have made a preliminary reading of literature relevant to the title of this thesis. I have incidentally made the following observations:

1. Many studies have been conducted on this subject (e.g. inculturation and marriage rituals).
2. The readings I have made inform my research in various aspects of my topic. They address the topic of my research from broader, as well as from specific perspectives.

The following are the areas, which I have found these readings to be addressing. I will name each category as I proceed:

1.11.1 Inculturation and marriage rituals in general:

First, the following books are most important for the topic of inculturation:

- Anthony (2012:237) is of the opinion that a historical analysis of the development of the church indicates that the notion of inculturation at the beginning of this century was relatively new in missiology. This is supported by Crollius (in Bate 1994:1) who posited that its appearance could initially be linked to the attempt to find a model whereby “the church becomes part of the culture of a people”. For Anthony (2012:237), it is not amazing that Onwubiko (1997) said that inculturation is “new vision of an old problem in the church or a new approach to a solution of an old problem...”. He even states that the church in Africa has gone far as regards the practice of inculturation. For instance, in line with Mass in the Catholic Church in Ethiopia there is an Ethiopian rite, which is already in existence. In Zaire, there is the Zairean rite, which addresses to the people’s religious categories

(Anthony 2012:242). However, Anthony (2012:242) notes that in Nigeria the proposed rite is still at proposal level and not practised.

- Shorter (1985:5), on Christianization of culture, defines culture as a “transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a pattern capable of development and change and belongs to the concept of humanness itself”. Thus, from such a definition one can say the gospel in this movement of inculturation is meant to Christianise the dynamic culturally conveyed pattern of meanings that is symbolically personified. As a consequence of this missionaries are constantly attempting to incarnate the Evangel into their cross-cultural mission contexts with the knowledge that culture is open to improvement and modification. On this I can say this development and alteration needs to be gradually and eventually owned by the receptor culture in order to effectually reinforce the Christianisation of their culture.
- Anthony (2012:238); Amadi (2008:8); Panganiban (2004:63); King (2000:101) and Shorter (19994) concur that there are certain concepts that seem to suggest similar meanings at practical level with inculturation but they are not. These terms seem to have definitions, which overlap to a greater or lesser extent with inculturation. Such terms include missionary adaptation or accommodation, indigenisation, adaptation and accommodation as well as inculturation.
- Panganiban (2004:630) asserts that the point that inculturation has arisen as the commonly used term in the Roman Catholic Church could partly be explained by the fact that the alternative terms have been found to be inadequate. She notes that Schneller finds the terms imposition, translation and adaptation to lack the proper nuances in defining the associations between faith and culture. He then considers other terms more suitable such as indigenisation, contextualisation, incarnation and inculturation.
- Cowden (2015:103) notes that the introduction of instruments into Baptist worship is another historical point of liturgical inculturation. The position of early Baptists in America was part of a long Christian heritage that rejected the use of instrumental music in worship. They gave many reasons, ranging from practical to theological, for refusing to allow instruments in their churches.

- Soosamariam (2006:1) notes that in the process of transmitting the Good News, evangelisation must purify culture; therefore, cultural elements must be reflected. Thus, for this scholar it is wise that in the inculturation of the Gospel message, its meanings and values must be declared to the hearers using their own cultural symbols and language to enable them to feel at home in their own culture and be excited about sharing in the mission of the of the Universal Church. From the foregoing views, it is my conclusion that in the inculturation of the Gospel message its meanings and values must be propounded to the believers using their own cultural symbols and language.
- Magesa (2004:10) asserts that from the research made on the Catholic Church in Kenya, the Catholic officials cited cultural awareness and pride on the one hand and Christianity's potential contribution to the growth of African culture on the other, as one of the reasons of inculturation. For the African Christians in Kenya to identify extremely with the Christian church, and treat it as their own, rather than as a foreign organisation, it ought to be deep-seated in the local cultures, taking on the people's customs and ways of doing things.
- Magesa (2004: 10) notes the benefits to the Roman Catholic Church in Kenya. For instance, elements such as singing, dancing, the clapping of hands and the beating of drums in the liturgy are evidence of a new awareness toward accepting African customs in the church. Magesa (2004:10) also noted that a small group of young respondents expressed their conviction that inculturation was unnecessary.
- Kurgat (2009:95) also delineates some of the hindrances to inculturation. This scholar wrote a full-length research paper on the theology of inculturation and the African church. According to this scholar, when Christianity was inaugurated in Busia District, African marriage practices were declined as being irreconcilable with those of the Christian notion of marriage. These included polygamy, sororate and levirate marriage.
- Anthony (2012:242) asserts that in Africa vernacular language is also applied among the African Christian worshipping communities. He goes on to point out that Nathaniel (1994) remarks that despite the full mandate given to Catholic Bishops and priests to practice inculturation, it is painful that in all this important task of making Christianity more

meaningful to Africans not much has been accomplished. For instance, many of the suggestions made by many Nigerian theology lecturers and students in their dissertations lie idle in the library or college archives. Nothing of their proposals has been practiced. He also declares that there are still many African theologians who do not see the need for inculturation. Such theologians still prefer to walk, talk, and live in the white men's culture, which they regard as superior to theirs (Anthony 2012:241). It is my conclusion that a certain group of theologians still look down upon the African culture.

- Prom's (2013) thesis entitled *The inculturation of the Gospel Implications for the Methodist Church the Gambia's quest for church leadership* is reviewed. According to the above scholar in the Gambian Methodist church in West Africa, the marriage rite of passage has been left mostly in the hands of the family and relatives Prom (2013:112). He went on to assert that the church just waits to receive such a couple as engaged and then are married in church, except the presence of an invited Minister to the traditional customary ritual.

My observation about the above-mentioned books (and research articles) is that most are written from Roman Catholic theological perspectives or Roman Catholics write them. While these Christian views are important to read they have made me aware of a huge gap in perspectives from other church traditions, especially evangelical traditions in which my church is located. It is in this gap that my research will play a role. However, my contribution will be confined to the NBC of Zimbabwe churches.

1.11.2 African culture and identity:

Secondly, there is literature that focuses on African culture and identity:

- Mbiti (1997:131) delves more specifically into the aspect of African rituals as opposed or differentiated from Eurocentric or oriental practices being adapted relatively easy into Christianity lifestyles. This is helpful in understanding why Africans are susceptible to external influences including Christian belief systems and the related practices. According to him preparation for marriage is a long process, the vital moments of which may be marked with rituals. Some of the rituals are the initiation rites. Mbiti (1997:132) goes on to assert that one of the educational determinations of initiation rites is to familiarize young people with matters of sex, marriage, reproduction and family life. He posits that the

initiation is a ritual consecration and training for marriage. It is then after the process of initiation can the young people engage in marital affairs. This is significant if applied to marriage issues in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

- In a book synopsis, Okonkwo (2010:1) also points out that traditional marriage and Christian marriage ceremonies presently exist as two distinct rites in some parts of Africa. This scholar asks a question why there is no way of bringing the two together to avoid any form of duplication or multiplication of rituals.
- In this category, a research article by Davis (2011) has provided necessary perspectives on African customs and their necessity for providing identity and self-esteem. However, I am apprehensive as to how their perspectives are going to enhance, if not contradict the new identity Christians find when they get converted into the new faith and lifestyle. Davis (2011) thinks that in Africa, young men and women are thoroughly equipped since marriage is a most serious matter. For this scholar the responsibilities of married life and teachings about sex are taught to the young men and women. As such, various rites and ceremonies are performed as part of the wedding ritual.
- Davis (2011) outlines numerous rituals to cleanse or bless the couple at a wedding ceremony. For instance, the oldest woman present sprays *gin* on the couple whilst other relatives would consecrate the new union amongst the Yoruba people. *Gin* is said to be closely associated with ancestral spirits. Along with this, Davis (2011) says the woman who is about to get married is given a clay pot by her father's sister if it is among the Bemba people of Central Africa. On this aspect, the writer quickly points out that the clay pot stands for the womb that is filled and blessed with many pregnancies since the chief purpose of marriage is reproduction. From this, I can say rituals play a significant role in marriage issues.
- Above all, Davis (2011) proclaims that if it is among the Hutu, on the day after her wedding the woman's body is smeared with milk and herbs to cleanse her from her previous life and make her clean. Amongst the Ndembu, the bride would walk backward into her husband's house. When she has done that an old woman instructed in matters related to sex and

marriage accompanies her. The old woman would then offer the bride beads. The beads signify children. Such an action blesses her with fertile marriage.

1.11.3 Literature that addresses specific contexts of Zimbabwean marriages and associated cultural practices

In the third category, the following literature addresses specific contexts of Zimbabwean marriages and associated cultural practices. This literature also refers extensively to Christian influence and impact on African marriages among the Zimbabweans. The following authors are outstanding:

- Scholars like Gombe (2000), Thorpe (1996) and others are of the opinion that a man marrying from the Shona culture has to observe the payment of lobola, which is called *roora* in ChiShona. This is done during the process of the Shona wedding ceremony. This is an exhibition or sign of love and affection when a man saves up and marries his beloved. In Zimbabwe, *roora* happens in various stages. Each stage has its own traditions and small amounts to pay. The processes vary from area to area because in Shona culture there are twelve different ethnic groups (<https://makupsy.wordpress.com/2014/11/lobola-procedures> accessed 17-06-16).
- Mawere and Mawere (2010:226) declare that the father would also ask for a certain amount of bride price (*pfuma*) called *rugaba /rusambo*, which is meant to cover the heavy responsibility the parent, underwent in raising the daughter. The intermediary is also asked for a head of cattle (*danga*). This view is also strongly supported by Gombe (2000:104).
- Shoko (2009:1), comments that, “The Komba rite is intended to move a mature girl (*mhandara*) from the state of girlhood to that of womanhood. It is also meant to initiate uncircumcised non-Varemba (*vashenji*) women who marry Varemba men into their female traditions and customs...”. This shows that the Komba ritual is significant to Shona-Karanga people in Mberengwa.
- Gombe (2000) points out that in Shona courtship rituals elderly women (*chembere*) also have a major role. For example, when the mature girl is taken for marriage they would strongly teach her on how to be a good homemaker. Even the uncles play an important role

in teaching the mature boy how to be a good husband. It is my conclusion that a number of Shona traditional courtship rituals are or were taken into consideration.

- According to Nyathi (2001) and Bozongwana (2000) in Ndebele traditional culture, there are puberty rituals for both boys and girls. For Nyathi (2001:97) the biological changes and the bodily changes experienced overpower the adolescents. The youths get into a crisis where critical decisions must be made. Nyathi (2001, 97) points out that at that moment the youths would require supreme backing. These puberty rituals would then prepare the youths for new roles. These roles are to do with marriage, procreation and family responsibility.
- Dube (2014), notes that in the Kalanga tribe of Zimbabwe marriage is a bit complex if one considers the marriage ritual practice in line with a virginity test termed *n'holo we mwizana*. According to Dube, the father-in-law should first test his daughter-in-law's virginity to make sure she was still a virgin, but this has been questioned by others. Dube (2013) also mentions such a ritual.
- Engelbrecht (2007), posits that the Shangaan people have their own rituals in connection with weddings. For this scholar, Shangaan girls are initiated to marriageable young women in a rite that includes scarring of the face and arms. The initiation is followed by a phase of freedom of courtship. The marriage involves a contract between the families. In this case, an intermediary visits the girl's parents to make the preparations. After the authorisation of the parents the go-between would be provided with a feast and would give the girl's parents gifts. Such a practice meant that the marriage was thorough.

In the next section, I will now consider literature on the Shona traditional wedding and other related rituals.

- Gombe (2000:123) posits that there is a *kusungira* type of ritual, which is conducted by numerous Shona people in a number of places. This is done for any bride who has been married through *kukumbira*, *kutizisa*, or *kutizira*. This is performed during the bride's first pregnancy, and should be between seven and eight months. Before this ritual is conducted, both the bride and the groom are forbidden to meet the parents of the bride.

They can only meet at funerals, and are also asked for a head of cattle (*danga*) (Gombe 2000:104).

- In Zimbabwe, *roora* happens in various stages. Each stage has its own traditions and small amounts to pay. The processes vary from area to area because in the Shona culture there are twelve different ethnic groups (<https://makupsy.wordpress.com/2014/11/lobola-procedures/> accessed 17-06-16). Firstly, after the parents of the boy notice that the two really want to be married, they have to look for an intermediary (*munyai/ dombo*). This one will be a go-between of the two different families. Through the go-between, the girls' parents request for a hoe (*badza*) and *makandinzwanani* where they will be saying, "Who told you about me having a daughter?" (Mawere and Mawere 2010:226). The payment of a bride price (*roora*) is significant in Shona traditional culture.

The next section focuses on literature that deals with missiology as a scientific discipline and its bearing on the subject matter.

1.11.4 Missiology as a scientific discipline and its bearing on the subject matter

The fourth category of literature reviewed is that dealing with missiology as a scientific discipline and its bearing on the subject matter. Since Missiology is a very broad discipline, I have specifically searched for literature that speaks to missiology's transformative role in culture and the marriage institution in particular. I have found the following literature to be outstanding in content and application. The following authors are worth noting:

1.11.4.1 Missiology relevant literature: contemporary and classic

- Bosch (1991) is one of the works I will review. Bosch (1991:454) asserts that "inculturation suggests a double movement: there is at once inculturation of Christianity and Christianization of culture". On the inculturation of Christianity, Bosch (1991:451) suggests that a genuine Evangelical message should also take into consideration "the meaning systems already present in the context". This means that a really inculturated Christianity in the Matabeleland and Midlands regions should be a contextually informed Good News.
- H. Richard Niebuhr (1894-1962)'s *Christ and Culture* is a classic work which is to be reviewed in this research study. His work reveals that he speaks of Christ and culture as the two points of reference for faith and ethics and challenges a most modern age group of

Christians to be true to Christ in a materialistic age. In a *New York Times* book review H. Richard Niebuhr distinguishes five typical answers to the Christian's problem of setting the relation between Christ and culture, which holds him as the sea holds its fish. I have to consider such a stance in the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

1.11.5 Literature that assists with the methodological aspect of the research

In the fifth category I note that several books have been written that can assist with the methodological aspect of the topic. In this section, I highlight only a few of the books, since it is practically impossible to mention them all.

1.11.5.1 Literature on the use of research methodologies as used in the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology at UNISA

The following literature is consulted specifically to provide insight as well as tools in the use of research methodologies as cultivated in the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology at UNISA, since these are recommended approaches. The Tutorial letters cover the method in line with the seven-point cycle of Kritzinger and the four-point praxis cycle. I have consulted study guides, tutorial letters and other research notes at my disposal. The following sources and their use are mentioned in brief:

- Tutorial letter 101/1/2014 Research in Missiology: HPMSG80 Year Module. Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology: UNISA. This delineates the methodological requirements I applied in the writing of my Doctoral thesis.
- Tutorial Letter for DTh. Students 101/2011 Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology: UNISA. This describes the requirements I followed in the writing and presentation of my Doctoral thesis.
- MTHMS15. 2010. Structured MTh. Programme Tutorial Letter 101/2010. Discipline of Missiology, Unisa: Pretoria describes aspects of the Praxis Cycle, which helped as one of the methodologies.
- Baron E, Mangayi L and Nel RW. 2017. The Dynamics of Mission. Only study guide of Module MIN1501. Discipline of Missiology. Unisa: Pretoria assisted with the latest information on the Praxis Cycle especially on the Strategies for Mission.

1.11.5.2 Other literature on research methodology

- Because of the nature of the research topic, I use a mixed method research paradigm. I have used Creswell and Plano Clark (2011:11). Tashakkori and Creswell (2007 b: 4) describe this type of research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in a single study. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011:12) outline the advantages of such an approach. In addition to this Johnson and Christensen (2010:444), point out that it has the strength of employing words, pictures and narrative, which add meaning to numbers.
- I also employ three cross-associated methods: the phenomenological, historical and theological approaches. The phenomenological approach is used since for Leedy and Omrod (2010:14) this type of approach attempts to comprehend people's perceptions, perspectives and comprehension of a particular context. This method is an orderly study of the religious phenomena (that which appears): setting aside all assumptions about the truth or falsity of specific beliefs as seen by some scholars. Allen (1987) says that all religious data are historical; so no phenomena can be understood outside their history. The science of theology gathers knowledge through causes and deduces conclusions from principles (www.thesumma.infor/one/one20php).
- I also use research instruments described by Phellas, Bloch and Seale (2011:184); Johnson and Christensen (2008:203); Babbie (2007:255); Leedy (1993:23), and Moorhead and Griffin (1995:55). These research instruments include the questionnaires, interviews and the observations. I use them since they have many advantages.
- Furthermore, I also apply ethical considerations proposed by Babbie (2007:62); Moorhead and Griffin (1995:555) and other scholars. These are ethical issues concerned with anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, right to privacy, protection from harm, and voluntary participation, to mention but a few.
- I also consider reliability and validity as described by Babbie (2007:313); Punch (2004:98); Moorhead and Griffin (1995:555) and others. In this case, the reliability of a measure is the degree to which it is constant over time, whilst validity delineates the magnitude to which the research measures what it is proposed to measure.

There are several other books that aid in the methodological aspect of the research study.

1.11.6 Other sources: Bible, Internet sources, Turnitin and Bible commentaries

A number of academic sources are put to use.

- I use the Holy Bible New International Version as Literature in research (Cf. Contextual Bible Study approach of Gerald West) to support my views. The King James Version and Holy Bible: New Living Translation are used for comparison's sake. Commentaries and Hermeneutical tools, for example use of Greek and Hebrew languages are referred to where necessary.
- Internet sources are also used in this research study.
- General remarks, disclaimers, measure of error, and the use of Turnitin, are followed to enhance originality of my research. This last point helps in 'covering my back' and thus declaring my intent to 'play open cards' in my dealings with literature sources. This will be done despite my Declaration Statement on Plagiarism.

In the foregoing paragraphs, I have given a summary of the review of literature that I will make use of in this study. I have highlighted literature relevant to inculturation and marriage rituals in general, African culture and identity, literature dealing with the specific contexts of Zimbabwean marriages and associated cultural practices, and Missiology as a scientific discipline and its bearing on the subject matter. I have also summarised works in line with literature on the use of research methodologies as cultivated in the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology at UNISA and sources like the Bible, Internet sources, and Turnitin and Bible commentaries. The next section focuses on the structure of chapters.

1.12 The structure of chapters

In order to carry out the objectives of the study I have fashioned my discussion based on two domains. The first domain deals with the empirical study on NBC of Zimbabwe, in relation to the inculturation of marriage rituals. The second domain develops solutions to the problem. It is exploratory, and seeks new understanding. Chapter 7 gives a summary, conclusions and recommendations.

An overview of each chapter follows:

Chapter 1 focuses on orientation and overview of the study on the missiological critique of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. It sets out the motivation for the study, and a statement of the problem and research questions. It states the purpose and objectives of the study, the research methods and research techniques. The limitations and assumptions of the study are noted. The summary of the Review of Literature and locating the study in the Discipline of Missiology through definition of key terms are also included. In terms of the Praxis Cycle, it covers identification / insertion.

Chapter 2 explores the context analysis of the NBC of Zimbabwe. The social and church analyses are explained. This is done to understand the missiological critique of the inculturation of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Therefore, it covers the Context analysis of the Praxis Cycle.

Chapter 3 focuses on a survey of marriage rituals among the NBC of Zimbabwe through data collected from church members. Thus, the context analysis of the Praxis Cycle is covered.

Chapter 4 presents and analyse the data from the survey. The responses are analysed into survey specific tendencies of NBC of Zimbabwe church members and church officials. Their agreements and disagreements are discussed. Like the previous two chapters, it covers the context analysis of the Praxis Cycle.

Chapter 5 concentrates on discussion of findings. I discuss why members responded in the way they did. The aspect of reflexivity is considered. This chapter therefore covers the theological reflection segment of the Praxis Cycle.

Chapter 6 centres on missiological discourse, dealing with the theological or missiological discussion. It covers the strategies for mission in the Praxis Cycle. I further explore the missiological discourse which include the definitions of relevant terms like missiology, culture and inculturation, since they are pertinent to the discussion. The spectacles used like Pentecostal, conservative and African theologian are explained. Richard. Niebuhr and David Bosch are indicated as the basis of the argumentation.

Chapter 7 contains the Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations. Like the preceding chapter, it covers the Strategies for mission.

In the next section, I define important terms and concepts relevant to the study. I take such a stance so that I locate the study in the discipline of Missiology.

1.13 Locating the study in the Discipline of Missiology

According to Plato in his book, *Cratylus* cited by Mgojo (1977:35), “To teach a thing rightly it is necessary to define its name...”. As such, I will define certain terms in this research in accordance with how they are used in the study. The following words are defined operationally:

1.13.1 Missiology

Scholars have attempted to define missiology in a number of ways. Firstly, according to Van Schalkwyk (2010:39), Missiology is “A critical reflection on the nature and the movement of God’s mission in the world; and a critical but pro-active reflection on the church’s participation in this movement towards the realisation of SHALOM; as this relates to mission endeavours-AND as this relates to other agents of God’s movement”. In brief, one can as well view it as a study of the church’s participation in God’s movement in the world. Furthermore, Missiology⁹ refers to an interdisciplinary “field” of study. Ivan Illich, cited by Bosch (1991:493) defines Missiology in a poetic language. He says Missiology is, “The science about the word of God as the church in her becoming; the church as a surprise and a puzzle; the church in her growth; the church when her historical appearance is so new that she has to strain herself to recognize her past in the mirror of the present” (Bosch 1991:493). It is the academic discipline, which researches, records and applies data relating to the biblical source, the history and the anthropological principles within the NBC of Zimbabwe. In fact, numerous disciplines, including theological disciplines, Anthropology, Economics and Linguistics also contribute insights to Missiology. It even encompasses the techniques and the theological base for Christian mission in relation to the Shona and Ndebele people in the NBC of Zimbabwe of the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. Therefore, Missiology is actually a multi-disciplinary branch of Theology centred on Jesus Christ and his mission, which studies the mission of the NBC of Zimbabwe in all its aspects. Having defined the term Missiology

⁹Charles and Marguerite Kraft note that some critics have objected to the term missiology because of its etymological basis of being half Latin and half Greek. For the two scholars the English word mission came into popular use in various ways theological, ecclesiastical and political in the 16th and 17th centuries (Tippet 1987: xix).

as a discipline centred on Jesus and multidisciplinary discipline, in the next paragraph I attempt to define the term inculturation since it is important in this study as well.

1.13.2 Inculturation

Corrie (2007:181) notes that Raj posits that the term inculturation describes how the Christian faith interacts with a culture by influencing its people's understanding of the gospel and the way in which it is practised and shared within that particular culture. Thus, it is the presentation and re-expression of the Gospel in forms and terms proper to the Shona and Ndebele cultures. It then results in the imaginative re-interpretation of both without being disloyal to the other. Thus, in this study it means the presentation and re-expression of the Christian Gospel of the NBC of Zimbabwe in marriage practices and expressions proper to the Shona and Ndebele cultures. Thus, it refers to the endeavour to discover a model whereby the NBC of Zimbabwe becomes part of the Shona and Ndebele cultures. This covers the evangelisation of the culturally varied Shona and Ndebele people, so that the local congregations of the NBC of Zimbabwe may come to birth with "their own face", that of their own culture.

1.13.3 Culture

According to Niebuhr (2001:32), Malinowski Bronislaw defines the term *culture* as the "artificial secondary environment" which man superimposes on the natural. It encompasses language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organisation, inherited artefacts, technical processes and values¹⁰. As such, the term culture in this study refers to the traditional values and practices of Shona and Ndebele people under study.

1.13.4 Rituals

According to www.dictionary.com accessed on 18 December 2017, the term ritual denotes an established or prescribed procedure for a religious or other rite¹¹. This actually denotes religious ceremonies consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order. These are ways of communicating religious significance through word, symbol, and action. Therefore, rituals refer to sacred specific repeatable actions that members of the NBC of Zimbabwe have deemed effective and fitting responses to God who is the ultimate reality. In this study, of course, I deal specifically with marriage rituals.

¹⁰ Malinowski, Bronislaw, art, "Culture" *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Vol. IV, p 621.

¹¹ This is supported by <https://en.m.wikipedia.org> accessed on 18 December 2017 which says, "The English word "ritual" etymologically comes from the Latin *ritualis*, 'that which pertains to rite'(ritus).

1.13.5 Marriage rituals

This means the solemn ceremonies in which two people in the NBC of Zimbabwe make their relationship public, authorised and permanent.

1.13.6 Marriage

According to Stritof (2017:1), “Marriage is a social and legal contract between two individuals that unites their lives legally, economically, and emotionally.”. Marriage is defined differently and by dissimilar entities, based on cultural, religious and personal factors. According to www.marriageregistrar.co.za accessed on 18 December 2017 a marriage is usually formalised at a wedding or marriage ceremony at which a religious official, a government official or a state-approved official officiates. The contractual marriage union usually implies that the couple has legal obligations to each other throughout their lives, until they decide to divorce or through death. There are various types of marriages, such as polygyny, polyandry, group marriage or monogamy (www.sociologyguide.com), accessed 18 December 2017).¹² According to the Royal Anthropological Institute (1951:110), “Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are recognised legitimate offspring of both parents”. Thus, diverse scholars define the term marriage differently. In this study monogamy is the acceptable form of marriage in which one man marries one wife. It denotes a legally recognised union of NBC of Zimbabwe man and woman as partners in a marriage relationship within the Shona and Ndebele culture. Thus, it represents how the Shona and Ndebele members of the NBC of Zimbabwe make their relationship public, official and long lasting. This is already a point of tension between a culture that allows a man to have more than one wife, and the church that only allows a man to marry one wife (refer to the NBC of Zimbabwe Constitution).¹³

1.13.7 Mission

“Mission” comes from a Latin word that means, “To send” (<https://www.vocabulary.com> accessed 18 December 2017). It was first used in this way by Jesuit missionaries, who sent members of their order overseas to establish schools and churches. Bosch defined the term mission as the total commission, which God sets the Church for the salvation of the world (Livingstone 1993:3). This

¹² According to <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>, accessed on 18 December 2017, “In the Christian society a one-man one-woman model for the Christian marriage was advocated by Saint Augustine (354—439 AD) with his published letter *The Good of marriage*. To discourage polygamy, he wrote that it was lawful among the ancient fathers: whether it be lawful now also, he would not hastily pronounce...”.

¹³ Article 11: Doctrinal basis number 5 says “Recognising monogamy as the ideal state of family life according to the Bible, this Convention places on record its adherence there to”.

shows that Bosch at that moment was of the view that mission has a definite goal in proclaiming salvation to the people. However, in the study I will use Bosch's broad definition in *Transforming mission* (1991:368-510). I consider the mission of the NBC of Zimbabwe in the light of several aspects of missiology include *Missio dei*¹⁴, mediating salvation, the quest for justice, evangelism, contextualisation, liberation, common witness and the priesthood of the believers as he propounded them in my assessment of the inculturation of marriage rituals of the Convention.

1.13.8 Missiological critique

According to <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>, (accessed on 9 December 2017) a critique is “a detailed analysis and assessment of something, especially a literary, philosophical or political theory”. In this study, it refers to a detailed analysis and assessment of the inculturation of marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. Therefore, missiological critique denotes a detailed analysis and assessment of the theology of the NBC of Zimbabwe in respect of the inculturation of the marriage rituals.

1.13.9 Convention

According to www.dictionary.com, (accessed on 18 December 2017) a Convention usually refers to a meeting of delegates representing political, church, social or fraternal organisations. In this study, it means a group of churches that pursue the same philosophical religious beliefs and practices.¹⁵

1.13.10 Constitution

This refers to a written document, which is a declaration of the beliefs and understanding of the sacred scripture of the NBC of Zimbabwe. It covers the doctrinal beliefs, composition of church government, organisational arrangement and purposes as a body (bible.org/article/constitution), accessed 26 November 2017). It is fundamentally essential for the churches in the NBC of Zimbabwe if they are to glorify and accomplish God purpose.

¹⁴ According to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/missio-dei> *Missio dei* is a Latin Christian theological term that can be translated as the mission of the God or the sending of God.

¹⁵ This then denotes all the churches under the NBC of Zimbabwe, which have philosophical beliefs and practices that are similar in Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

1.14 Summary

Overall, this chapter has given the motivation for the study, statement of the problem, the research questions, purpose and objectives of the study. Significance, delimitations and limitations of the study have been given. A brief outline of the research methodology has been delineated. The assumptions of the study are given. A summary of reviewed related literature and structure of chapters were delineated. Above all, locating the study in the discipline of Missiology through definitions of important terms and concepts related to the study was done. In Chapter 2, I delve into the context analysis of the NBC of Zimbabwe. The social and church analysis is elucidated.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT ANALYSIS OF THE NBC OF ZIMBABWE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter 2 corresponds to the context analysis phase of the praxis cycle. I analyse the social and church contexts of the NBC of Zimbabwe. Firstly, I aim to answer the following questions: What is the African context of the marriage rituals? What is the Zimbabwean context of the marriage rituals? Secondly, I examine the following questions: What is the origin of Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe? What promoted the birth of the NBC of Zimbabwe? What is the history of the origins, structure, beliefs and practices of the NBC of Zimbabwe since they have a strong bearing on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions?

This context analysis is done in accordance with Holland and Henriot (1983) as propounded by Baron, Mangayi and Nel (2017:22). I analyse the historical dimensions and structural elements of the NBC of Zimbabwe. I also analyse the local, regional, national and international level of the NBC of Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the dimension of faith and religious dimensions of traditions that represent that faith is delineated. “The Christian tradition does not exist in a vacuum. It takes shape in specific historical contexts and this development is still going on because the dynamic nature of the incarnation. God, in Jesus Christ revealed his mission in the world,” (Baron, Mangayi and Nel 2017:23).

2.1 Social analysis

2.1.1 The African context of marriage rituals

To give a missiological critique of the NBC of Zimbabwe in relation to the inculturation of marriage rituals, the literature on African and Zimbabwean culture needs to be analysed. I would like to acknowledge that countless works have been written on this. Some of these are examined to determine the degree of inculturation of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. I shall first review the works that deal with African culture which are outside Zimbabwe with reference to marital rituals or rites before examining the ones on Zimbabwean culture.

2.1.1.1 Marriage rituals outside the Zimbabwean context

There is a lot of literature that deals with marriage rituals in African culture. These include works by Mbiti (1997) and Davis (2011) to mention but a few. Mbiti (1997) discusses African religions and philosophy, whilst Davis (2011) deals with rites of passage: African cultural initiation rites.

According to Mbiti (1997:130), “Marriage is a complex affair with economic, social, and religious aspect which often overlaps so firmly that they cannot be separated from one another...”. Thus, one can say marriage is something complicated. In this study, I deal with its religious dimension concentrating on rituals, bearing in mind that there are also those other aspects that contribute to one’s fuller comprehension of the African ideas and practices of marriage.

According to Mbiti (1997:131) preparations for marriage is a long process, the vital moments of which may be marked with rituals. Some of the rituals are the initiation rites. Mbiti (1997:132) goes on to assert that one of the educational purposes of initiation rites is to familiarise young people with matters of sex, marriage, reproduction and family life. He notes that the initiation is a ritual consecration and training for marriage. It is after the process of initiation that the young people can engage in marital affairs. This is also significant to marriage issues if applied to the NBC of Zimbabwe. Mbiti (1997:132) further declares, “Since the whole community participates in the initiation rites, it is therefore the entire corporate body of society which prepares young people for marriage and family life”. It is my conclusion that initiation rituals are remarkable in the African culture.

Mbiti (1997:132) further points out that in societies where there are no initiation rites it is the duty and responsibility of parents and relatives to regularly instruct their children in marital affairs. In this case, girls are educated in food preparations, behaviour towards men, caring for children, looking after the husband and other domestic affairs. On the other hand, boys are taught what most concerns men, like looking after cattle, behaviour towards one’s in-law and how to acquire the bride price. Thus, I conclude that parents and relatives play a significant role in guiding and counselling youngsters in marital affairs.

Mbiti (1997:132) explicitly describes some rituals connected with the wedding ceremonies in the African continent. For him there are countless customs of the wedding procedure as there are African people. According to him in some societies, the ceremony continues several days and is full of rituals. He describes some of the rituals connected with the *Batoro* wedding ceremony (Mbiti 1997:135). He notes that when the marriage gift has been given a night is fixed for the wedding ceremony to occur. On that night, the bridegroom sends nine men to go and collect the bride from her home. On arrival the party is met by the bridegroom who comes to the doorway of the courtyard and stands there holding a spear. The bride is then brought into the house where the bridegroom’s parents are sitting against the wall.

At that juncture, a rite is then performed by which the bridegroom sits on and off, four times first, on his father's lap and then on the mother's lap. The bride repeats this act but only three times. She is then taken to another house specially prepared for the occasion. Commenting on this, Mbiti (1997:137) points out that sitting on and off the parents' lap is a rite of the new birth. The bride and the bridegroom are being born afresh. They are made twins; they enter ritually into the phase of maturity. This is also a rite of handing down the torch of life: the parents pass on the drumbeat of life and a new rhythm starts. It is now up to the couple to reproduce, to nurture them and keep the streams of human generations flowing. It is my observation that there are many rituals in the African culture that link with marriage issues.

Mbiti (1997:136) also says that at the following sunrise the ritual of binding themselves to each other and of cleansing themselves from the former state of unmarried life is held. In this case the bride and her husband wash themselves in very cold water which has been placed in the courtyard enclosure and which is guarded by the bride's sister. This is the ritual of binding themselves to each other and of cleansing themselves from the previous state of unmarried life. "Symbolically these ritual ablutions are partly the death of former life of unproductivity and partly of the resurrection of the new life of procreation..." (Mbiti 1997:135). I therefore conclude that marriage rituals are vital in newly married couples.

As mentioned before Davis (2011) notes that marriage is widely acknowledged throughout the African continent as one of the most serious moments in a person's life. This is because marriage is closely related to procreation. Davis goes on to say that marriage from the stand point of African religion is never an affair between a man and a woman but an occasion that encompasses at least two families. More so, African families are generally quite large because they comprise numerous sub-units. The whole community has a stake in the marriage and will take part.

Davis (2011) also notes that in Africa, young men and women are thoroughly equipped, since marriage is a most serious matter. The responsibilities of married life and sex are taught to the young men and women. These are linked in various rites and ceremonies performed as part of the wedding ritual.

Davis (2011) outlines numerous rituals to cleanse or bless the couple at a wedding ceremony. For instance, the oldest woman present sprays *gin* on the couple, whilst other relatives would consecrate the new union amongst the Yoruba people. *Gin* is said to be closely associated with ancestral spirits. Along with this, Davis (2011) says that among the Bemba people of Central

Africa the woman who is about to get married is given a clay pot by her father's sister. Davis points out that the clay pot stands for the womb that is to be filled and blessed with many pregnancies since the chief purpose of marriage is reproduction. Among the Hutu Davis says that on the day after her wedding the woman's body is smeared with milk and herbs to cleanse her from her previous life and make her clean. Amongst the Ndembu, the bride would walk backward into her husband's house. When she has done that an old woman who is instructed in matters related to sex and marriage accompanies her. The old woman would then offer the bride beads. The beads signify children. Such an action is taken to bless her with a fertile marriage. I will try to show how the NBC of Zimbabwe deals with such issues in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

Above all, Davis (2011) points out that traditionally the marriage ceremonies signify not only the joining of the two families and even communities, but are also a representation of the joining of the two missions of the new couple. This means that along with performing marriage ceremonies of the coming together of male and female to produce offspring, preserve life and join families, marriage is an institution to help the husband and wife to fulfil their mission and aims in life, guaranteeing that they are working together towards the same end. Thus, rituals are important in a marriage set up in African culture.

Davis (2011) and Mbiti (1997) therefore both show that in African cultures outside Zimbabwe there are numerous rituals in connection with marriage. These ceremonies play a critical role in the marriage set up. In the next section, I shall examine the literature on Zimbabwean culture in connection with marriage rituals.

2.2 Marriage rituals in the Zimbabwean context

There is also a lot of literature on marriage rituals in Zimbabwean culture. Scholars like Mawere and Mawere (2010), Shoko (2009) and Gombe (2000), have written on the topic, and I examine them to see what light they can throw on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. I therefore review some of the works focusing on the initiation rituals, and marriage and its rituals.

2.2.1 Shona initiation rituals

There are two groups of Shona people in Zimbabwe namely the Varembe people who practise the Komba initiation rites for girls and boys, and the other group, which does not perform such rituals. It is remarkable that the Varembe people practise the Komba initiation rites to initiate girls. Some members of the Varembe are found in in Mberengwa area. Shoko (2009:1) says, "The Komba rite

is intended to move a mature girl (*mhandara*) from the state of girlhood to that of womanhood. It is also meant to initiate uncircumcised non-Varemba (*vashenji*) women who marry Varemba men into their female traditions and customs...”. This shows that the Komba ritual is significant to Shona–Karanga people in Mberengwa.

Still on the Shona-Karanga ethnic group in Zimbabwe, the Varemba boys (*majaha*) are circumcised during the *murundu* initiation rite. In this ritual, appointed elderly men of the Varemba group are the ones to lead such rites. This is conducted in the months of June and July (Shoko 2009:1). Like the girls, they are initiated from the state of boyhood to that of manhood. This happens when the boys are withdrawn from other people to live in a forest in the mountains far away from the villages. The initiates are also taught local traditions, and various skills such as hunting, dancing and war. They are even trained on how to be productive and supportive of the family. Thus through the initiation rites the Varemba boys are introduced to the art of communal living. The mature Varemba boys and girls are also permitted to share in the full privileges and duties of the community. They then enter into a state of responsibility. These candidates inherit new rights and new obligations. The candidates who undergo these rituals are also given new names. So during initiation rituals the Varemba boys and girls are introduced to new rights and responsibilities through the various teachings they receive.

The other category of Shona people is those who do not practise the Varemba type of rituals highlighted above. In this part of Shona society, the aunts and uncles play a critical role. They would prepare mature girl and boys in matters of sexual life, procreation and family responsibilities. For instance, the aunts would guide and counsel girls on cleanliness, good moral behaviour and how to be a commendable wife. On the other hand, uncles teach mature boys about good moral attributes and being a praiseworthy husband. In these rites, the boys are not taken into the forest away from the villages. The uncles and aunts guide and counsel them in their own homes and not those of their parents. This fits with what Mbiti (1992:98) says, “Initiation is a gateway to marriage. It gives the opportunity to the young to prepare for marriage. The period of seclusion is occasion of learning and for being initiated into new roles...”. Thus those Shona people who do not belong to the Varemba group are guided and counselled on marriage matters by their aunts and uncles.

The next segment I examine forms of traditional Shona marriages so that I will be able to assess their inculturation in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

2.2.2 Forms of traditional Shona marriages

I have noted that in traditional Shona culture people employ many ways of marriages. Some of the methods used are no longer applicable in this modern era. Scholars like Gombe (2000) are of the opinion that in the Shona traditional culture various forms were employed. For instance, some girls could use *kutizira* or *kutizira mukumbo* in which the girl would elope for varied reasons. One of them is pregnancy of the girl. On the other side, a boy could use *kutizisa* or *kutizisa mukumbo*. This is where the boy would make the girl he is in love with elope to his home without the knowledge of the girl's parents. It could be because the girl is pregnant or because the relative(s) are against the love relationship of the two. In modern Shona society such methods are observed as well. The traditional marriages are determined by a method of marrying one would have opted for.

Gombe (2000:82) acknowledges that *kubvunzira* or *kukumbira* was one of the ways which was respected and is given that honour now. Mawere and Mawere (2010:226) note that in this Shona culture there is a customary marriage system named *kukumbira* that support this. “*Kukumbira* is a customary marriage system where a grown up girl marries off with her informed consent and that of her parents a man of her own choice...”. Thus, in this marriage system a mature girl is married to a man of her own choice with the approval of the parents. In the Shona culture, this is the most lawful, greatly respected and admired traditional customary marriage system. After all that, the wedding ceremony will be conducted as well. Thus there are certain Shona traditional forms of marriage that can be inculturated by the NBC of Zimbabwe.

2.2.3 Shona courtship rituals

I have observed that in Shona traditional culture, there were various specific courtship rituals that were followed. For instance, when a mature girl had fallen in love with a suitor, the two had to have a meeting with a girl's aunt. At the aunt's place, the two were expected to exchange some love token (*nduma*) in her presence. According to Mutubuki (2007:85) the girl would give the boy *chindakuda*. This is a love token, which is a sign of her acceptance of a suitor. *Chindakuda* could be in the form of *shambo* (a plaited bangle), *chipeneti* (a safety pin) or *chimuti* (a short stick) (Mutubuki 2007:85). She is supposed to give the boy *nduma* (another love token), which could be a *chuma chemuhuro* (a necklace) or even *nhembe* (a skin apron), as sign of commitment to the love affair. This shows that love tokens play a significant role in the courtship process.

In addition to this, during the courtship process the aunts had a significant role to play in the traditional Shona society in guidance and counselling. For instance, the aunt would guide and counsel both the boy and the girl. The girl would be strongly encouraged to maintain good moral behaviour especially in line with keeping virginity (Gombe 2000:61). Along with this, in Shona courtship rituals elderly women (*chembere*) also have a major role. For example, when the mature girl is taken for marriage they would strongly teach her on how to be a good housewife. Even the uncles play an important role in teaching the mature boy how to be a good husband. Therefore, there are several Shona traditional courtship rituals to be taken into consideration. Having observed that in the next section I deliberate on the Shona traditional wedding and other related rituals.

2.2.4 Shona traditional wedding and other related rituals

According to Shona traditional culture, the month of November (*Mbudzi*) is respected as a sacred time. For instance, according to Sunday News (<http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/the-curse-of-november-marriages>), accessed 27 November 2016), “Every society has its own traditions and superstitions, and in Zimbabwe getting married in the month of November is a taboo. The belief goes back many years, with a fear that November wedding will bring bad luck...”. The writer of the above article goes on to say,

Just as it is in the Bible that after creating the world over six days, the Almighty God (Musikavanhu) rested on the seventh day, the local spiritual realm also rests during the month of November known as *Mbudzi* in Shona or *Ulwezi* in Ndebele...Cultural ceremonies such as *biras*, *kurova makuva* or even traditional marriage rites are regarded as taboo during this month...

This shows that in November everything that links to the spiritual and ancestral world of Zimbabwean tradition for the time being stops functioning. Because of this, no marriage rituals are conducted during that month as well. If anyone has to make a marriage rite, it should be done during any other month besides November. The Shona traditional people believe that this will anger the ancestral spirits. Therefore, the month of November (*Mbudzi*) is regarded as a sanctified period when people are not permitted to conduct marriage ceremonies. In the next section, I examine the Shona traditional wedding ceremony procedures.

2.2.4.1 Shona traditional wedding procedures

Shona people have certain wedding ceremony procedures that they observe. Scholars like Gombe (2000), Thorpe (1996) and others observe that a man marrying from the Shona culture has to pay lobola, called *roora* in ChiShona. This is done during the process of the Shona wedding ceremony. This is an exhibition or sign of love and affection when a man saves up and marries his beloved. In Zimbabwe, *roora* happens in various stages. Each stage has its own traditions and small amounts

to pay. The processes vary from area to area because in the Shona culture there are twelve different ethnic groups (<https://makupsy.wordpress.com2014/11/lobola-procedures> accessed 17-06-16). Firstly, after the parents of the boy notice that the two really want to be married, they have to look for an intermediary (*munyai/ dombo*). This one will be a go-between of the two different families. Through the go-between, the girls' parents request for a hoe (*badza*) and *makandinzwanani* where they will be saying, "Who told you about me having a daughter?" (Mawere and Mawere 2010:226). The payment of a bride price (*roora*) is significant in Shona traditional culture.

The second stage is when the list of groceries is given to the bridegroom prior to the wedding ceremony. Several scholars note that the new in-laws have to stick to the indicated requirements as a sign of respect. The third stage is the preparations of the payment when the bride's family would ask for a wooden plate (*ndiro*) from the intermediary. Once the plate has been provided a process called "*sunungurahomwe*," meaning loosen pockets or "*vhuramuromo*" meaning opening mouth is done. A small fee for the greeting of the guests is paid (<https://makupsy.wordpress.com2014/11/lobola-procedures> accessed 17-06-16).

The fourth stage is the payments stage, which is composed of numerous stages, which may take many days to complete. In this case gifts for the father (*zvireverere zvababa*) should be paid. It has been pointed out that the key payment is the *matekenyandebvu*, to acknowledge the bride's father for the pulling of the beard as his daughter sat on his knee as a child. In addition to this, gifts for the mother (*zvireverere zvamai*) are paid. In the past these included *mbereko* for carrying the bride in a pouch when she was still a baby as well as *mafukidzadumbu*, for covering of the belly of the mother (<https://makupsy.wordpress.com2014/11/lobola-procedures> accessed 17-06-16).

Together with this, in the Shona wedding ceremony there is the stage of the live goat (*Mbudzi yedare*), which is slaughtered during the payment process. This would be served after the completion of the wedding ritual. The other stage is the one in line with the gifts of the bride. In this case, the woman to be married would pick some money from the plate. In certain areas, the aunt sets this type of money.

Mawere and Mawere (2010:226) declare that the father would also ask for a certain amount of bride price (*pfuma*) called *rugaba /rusambo* which is meant to cover the heavy responsibility the parent underwent in raising the daughter. The intermediary is also asked for a head of cattle (*danga*). This view is also strongly supported by Gombe (2000:104). This stage traditionally is a gift of cattle. Normally the number of beasts may range between eight and ten. This can also be

paid in the form of equivalent cash nowadays. In this case, the father of the girl gets his own bull (*mhindura*), which is dedicated to the paternal spirits. On the other hand, the mother of the girl gets her most valued beast (*mombe yeumai*) (Mawere and Mawere 2010:227). This idea is also strongly supported by Gombe (2000:106). This beast is dedicated to the maternal spirits as well.

The last stage is the gift of clothes (*majasi*). The stage is dependent on the *Rusambo* stage (<https://makupsy.wordpress.com/2014/11/lobola-procedures> accessed 17-06-16). This is the gift of clothes that the groom is expected to buy for his in-laws. It is only after the *rusambo* has been paid and the bride's family pleased when the groom and his party will then be invited and be welcomed in the family, a process called *kupinzwa mumusha*. I will give a missiological critique of the inculturation of marriage in relation to these practices.

Mangena and Ndlovu (2013) in a paper they presented at the 1st Africana Womanism Conference in Harare from 27-29 October 2010 also discuss on the issue of bride price payment among the Shona people. According to Mangena and Ndlovu (2013), Janhi (1970, 33) states that in ancient times for the Shonas the payment of *roora* was made in form of one or two cows and a few bags of maize or rapoko. Some suitors either would work in the fields or simply gave hunted game as payment of *roora*. The bride price was always in two payments namely *rutsambo* and *roora*. Mangena and Ndlovu (2013) also cite Bourdillion (1982) as saying that *rutsambo* was the initial payment associated with the girl's sexual rights. The payment conferred on the husband exclusive sexual rights over his wife. This explains why adultery with a married woman was and is still punishable.

According to Mangena and Ndlovu (2013), in modern Shona society, these main requirements of the bride price have still been maintained. However, the two scholars maintain that some elements have been added. These include the grocery requirements. The following charges have also become part of the *roora*. The groom has to pay *vhuramuromo*, *matekenyandebvu*, *pwanyazhowa*, *mafukudzadumbu*, *mafidyongo amai* and other charges as well. Along with this, the two scholars have noted that some in-laws even ask for cell phones and cars as part of the bride price payment.

Last but not least, Mangena and Ndlovu (2013) also assert that some of the Shona communities have a separate charge for a girl who gets married soon after university graduation. Such a girl attracts a high charge because she possesses a fresh educational certificate (*chitupa chinyoro*). An educated girl attracts more money for two reasons. Firstly, it is a compensation for the money invested in the girl's education and it is believed that she would be of more value to the husband than an

uneducated girl would. Mangena and Ndlovu (2013) note that the modern Shona bride price is therefore becoming too expensive compared with what happened in traditional Shona culture.

According to Davis (2011), the Shona of Zimbabwe have a ritual in which the paternal aunt hands a clay pot full of water to the bride to bless her with a fertile marriage. Water is closely associated with fertility in Africa

Having described the Shona traditional wedding and other related rituals I conclude that several different rituals are observed. Several different writers have shown that the Shona traditional wedding ceremony consists of several different but related rituals. I next describe the *kusungira* ritual, which is an important practice of the Shona marriage rituals.

2.2.4.2 *Kusungira* ritual

In the Shona traditional culture, marriage rituals do not end with the payment of bride price (*roora*). Every marriage is expected to be fruitful through children. According to Gombe (2000: 123) there is a *kusungira* type of ritual which is conducted by numerous Shona people in a number of places. This is done for any bride who has been married through *kukumbira*, *kutizisa*, or *kutizira*. This is performed during the bride's first pregnancy, between the seventh and eighth months. Before this ritual is conducted both the bride and the groom are prohibited to meet the parents of the bride. They can only meet at funerals. In Shona traditional culture, there is a strong belief that if the bride and the groom happen to meet the named parents that will be dangerous (*vanotyorwa misana*). I can confirm from my own observation that the *kusungira* ritual is vital within Shona traditional culture.

In the preceding section I delineated the Shona traditional wedding and other related rituals. Having done that, I now examine Ndebele culture as it relates to marriage rituals with a view to seeing how they are inculturated in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

2.3. Ndebele marriage ritual practices

A lot of literature has been written about Ndebele marriage ritual practices. Ndebele traditional religious people, like the Shona, observe a number of cultural ritual practices. Works on puberty rituals are analysed first since they play a major role in the marriage issues.

2.3.1 Ndebele initiation rituals

According to Nyathi (2001) and Bozongwana (2000) there are puberty rituals for both boys and girls in Ndebele traditional culture. Nyathi (2001:97) says that the biological changes and the

bodily changes experienced overpower the adolescents. The youths get into a crisis where critical decisions must be made. At that moment, the youths would require supreme backing. These puberty rituals therefore prepare the youths for new roles. These roles are to do with marriage, procreation and family responsibility. It is part of a process of socialisation into adult life. In this section, I shall first focus on girls' puberty rituals and then move on to the boys' puberty rites.

2.3.1.1 Girls puberty rituals

In the puberty rituals the girl would receive schooling on various issues, including how to become a good wife, how to care for children, tolerable behaviour towards men, sex education and the regulation of one's sexual needs (Nyathi 2001:97). Bozongwana (2000:21) says, "Lessons begin immediately on how to be a good house wife. Care of children, behaviour towards men, use of sex and cookery are some of the things taught to the girl by the oldest woman of the home...". This indicates that girls receive teaching on how to be commendable homemakers and even how to have control over their sexual requirements. In the next section, I focus on the boys' puberty rituals since they are important in the inculturation of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe.

2.3.1.2 Boys' puberty rites (*Ukuthomba komfana*)

Once the expected fundamental physical and mental changes become apparent in the boy, it becomes indispensable for him to grasp what is happening to him in order to help him (Nyathi 2001:104). For instance, pimples (*inkobe*) appear on the boy's face and his voice breaks (*ukubhonga*). His breasts even turn to be large (*ukupuhla*). He would become cheeky. This is a significant passage from juvenile to maturity. So to help the boy to progress to the new phase puberty rituals are implemented. Thus, the puberty rituals are crucial to boys for they would teach them many qualities.

Scholars as Nyathi (2001:107) and Bozongwana (2000:20) concur that there are formal teachings given to the boy. In the formal teaching explanations are made to the boy about what has happened (Nyathi 2001:107). The boy is also told that now he is grown up but he is not yet someone's husband. He is strongly encouraged to control his sexual desires as well. Bozongwana (2000:20) points out that the boy receives teachings on how to settle disputes especially in a polygamous situation.

These initiation rites therefore play a significant role in the lives of the boys and girls to prepare them for marriage. These boys and girls would be maturing into manhood and womanhood respectively. In the next section, I examine literature on the marriage rituals in the Ndebele culture.

2.4 Ndebele Marriage rituals and payment of bride price (*amalobolo*)

Ndebele traditional culture has its own marriage rituals. Traditionally in both Ndebele and Shona customs what the groom pays as bride price was supposed to be a token of appreciation and a sign of commitment. It is also a sign of respect to the parents of the bride. The two would give a lot of value to the marriage (Mangena and Ndlovu 2013:473). Mangena and Ndlovu (2013:473, citing Andifasi (1970:28) note that *roora/ amalobolo* is "... an outward manifestation of the young man's love for his fiancé and is a safeguard against groundless divorce...". The attachment of a value to the woman was a way of according a status.

Payment of the bride price among the Ndebele had both emotional and spiritual value. Firstly, it was an expression of a feeling and also cemented ties between the children and their maternal ancestors through the payment of *inkomo yohlanga* (cow given to the mother of the wife). The bride price was a thank you from the son-in-law appreciating the family (*kuyisibongo somkwenyana ethakhazelela imuli aselayo ngenxayabakwabozala*). Secondly, it was precious to both sides of the relationship. It was a sign of love to the wife and her parents. It even ensured that the husband respects his wife. Thirdly, the children born were put in the ways of their mother's grandmothers through the custom of giving a cow to the mother-in-law (Sibanda 1998:109, cited by Mangena and Ndlovu 2013:473-474). This shows that bride price payment is essential in the Ndebele cultural societies.

In addition, in traditional Ndebele culture the ancestral spirits (*amadlozi*) are consulted to seek their official permission during the marriage proceedings. It is very important to note that when marriage is occurring there is an involvement of two families. When the bride is being taken away from her own family the spiritual dimension of her family must be told of the changes taking place. The ancestors (*amadlozi*) must be called to bless and protect her where she will be going (Nyathi 2001:117). Bozongwana (2000:24) supports this when he says, "Before the girl leaves for the groom's home a special rite is performed on her in the house and in the cattle kraal. *Amadlozi* must be told that she is leaving the home and the spirits must look after her. When the bride arrives at the groom's family, the spiritual family is informed to accept her as an addition...". It is my observation that blessings from the ancestral spirits are needed in Ndebele traditional marriage rituals.

Therefore, the Ndebele tribe observes various marriage rituals as part of their cultural practices. In the next section, I survey the literature on the Kalanga tribe in Zimbabwe.

2.5 Kalanga marriage rituals

According to Dube (2014), in the Kalanga tribe of Zimbabwe marriage is a bit complex if one considers the marriage ritual practice in connection with the virginity test termed *n'holo we mwizana*. The father-in-law should first test his daughter-in-law's virginity to make sure she was still a virgin. Dube notes that this issue has been extensively questioned. Some Kalanga people have dismissed the practice as a myth, which is meant to taint the image of their tribe, whilst others acknowledge that their ancestors valued this practice although it is no longer commonly practised. The fact that Dube (2014) says that it is no longer broadly practised shows that some Kalanga people of Zimbabwe practise it to some extent.

Dube (2013) supports the fact that it was once in existence in the Kalanga society. He stated that the Kalanga community in Matabeleland South has dumped a controversial cultural practice, whereby young women were ordered to have sexual intercourse with their father-in-law first before they slept with their husband. According to Dube (2013), the villagers who spoke to the Standard Community said that the Kalanga people have since stopped the practice because it was a breach of women's rights. On the breach of African women's rights Oduyoye (1995:4) cited by Musasiwa, Matikiti, Manyonganise and Matikiti (2010: 101) says,

In Africa, the very idea of a "free woman" conjures up negative images. We have been brought up to believe that a woman should always have a suzerain, that she should be "owned" by a man, be it her father, uncle, or husband. A "free woman" spells disaster...A single woman who manages her affairs successfully is an affront to patriarchy and a direct challenge to the so-called masculinity of men who want to "possess" her.

From the above view, I concluded that African patriarchal culture has always been oppressive to women. The government and many health focused Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) noted that the exercise posed a risk of transmitting Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) such as HIV and AIDS, as such they advised the Kalanga people

Another villager, Loghty Nleya (77) noted that the practice was important (Dube 2013:1). The interviewee pointed out that besides testing for virginity it also reinforced the relationship between the father and son. Because of that practice, in most cases a woman's first-born did not belong to her husband but to the father-in-law, since he would have been the first one to have a sexual relationship with her. It was even said that such a practice was meant to prepare the son to take over his father's younger wives in case he died. For the Kalanga group in Zimbabwe this ritual practice had a significant role to play.

This ritual practice of the Kalanga tribe of Zimbabwe is therefore a bit controversial. Some people say that it is still being practised, whilst others say it was not happening at all. The next section examines literature on the Shangaan group of people in Zimbabwe.

2.6 Shangaan marriage rituals

The Shangaan people have their own wedding rituals. Shangaan girls are initiated as marriageable young women in a rite that includes scarring of the face and arms. After the initiation, a phase of freedom of courtship would take place. The marriage involves a contract between the families. In this case, an intermediary visits the girl's parents to make the preparations. After the authorisation of the parents then the go-between would be provided with a feast and would give the girl's parents gifts. Such a practice meant that the marriage was thorough (Engelbrecht 2007).

At times the young man and woman would knot tall grasses as a sign of their love. In this case, the customary bride price would take the form of livestock, tools, baskets and beads. After the parents of the wife-to-be have accepted, a feast would then be provided. In addition to the prayer to the ancestors, a goat is sacrificed to guarantee that favour is conferred on the pair (Engelbrecht 2007).

These rituals were vital to the Shangaan people. In the next section, I shall examine the marriage rituals of the Tonga people of Zimbabwe.

2.7 Tonga marriage rituals

The Zambian Tonga tribe also had initiation ceremonies (www.everyculture.com accessed 17-06-2016). A girl was trained for her future as a man's wife. There was usually a time of living away from the village and a short ceremony that marked the girls' maturity. She was given a new name to indicate her adult status. A prospective husband had to pay bride price to the family of the bride, usually in the form of cattle. After marriage, a couple lived in the husband's village. Thus, the Tonga people have marriage rituals, which they observed in their culture.

I have surveyed the literature that deals with African or Zimbabwean culture in connection with marriage rituals or rites. In African culture in general and Zimbabwean culture in particular a number of rituals are followed. These rituals are important to these people. I will now examine literature or church records that deal with the church in general and not only NBC of Zimbabwe, since they help in evaluating the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

2.8 Church analysis

2.8.1 History of the NBC of Zimbabwe

The NBC of Zimbabwe has its origin and development within Protestantism. Many scholars have attempted to investigate origin and development, beliefs and practices of the Baptists from the first century, to the Reformation and up to the present. In line with the, apostolic succession view Hoad (1986:19) notes some Baptists claim “an unbroken line up to the apostles themselves,” regarding the principles they hold as having lived since the time of John the Baptist right to the present day Baptists. However, other scholars reject the “apostolic succession” view and rather declare, “Real legitimacy of Christianity must be found in the New Testament and nowhere else”. Furthermore, Wood (1977:12) traces the origins of the Baptists to the Anabaptists of Zurich, Switzerland, who are so called because they re-baptized adult believers who had been baptized as infants.¹⁶ According to *Religion Facts*, both groups had followers who sailed to America as pilgrims to avoid religious persecution in England and Europe and started Baptist churches in the early American colonies. A number of Baptist churches were established in the American colonies from the mid-17th century. From the 18th century up to the 19th century, Baptist churches continued to grow rapidly in Britain and Europe as well. In the 20th century, Baptist missionaries had established churches throughout Asia, Africa and South America. Hoad (1986:208) points out that the first Baptist Church in South Africa was established in 1820 at Grahamstown by the Baptists among some settlers who were established there. In 1905, the Baptist World Alliance was formed for the purpose of international Baptist co-operation. In the following sections I will scrutinise some of these points since they play a significant role in the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

Australian Baptists from South Africa started the Baptist Church in Zimbabwe¹⁷ in 1905, even though the British began their work in the country in 1917 and concentrated their activities on the European communities (Hoad 1986:208 cited in Motsi 1991:12). The Southern Baptists (from the USA) entered Zimbabwe in 1950 and then established a mission station at Sanyati in 1952, with a primary school and a hospital under Dr Giles Fort and his wife Dr Wanna Ann Fort. Clyde Dotson was an independent missionary in Rhodesia affording local medical treatment, who then requested the Foreign mission board of the Southern Baptist Convention to appoint him and his wife as

¹⁶Wood (1977: 7) also believes that the name “Baptist” itself appears to have initially been a nickname coined for those believers who stood to watch the baptizing of the believers in water.

¹⁷ Zimbabwe is former Rhodesia.

missionaries. The permission was granted on May 15, 1947 (Mwase 2009 online). The Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe grew from Sanyati and then spread throughout the country focused on western suburbs in towns and rural communities (Mwase 2009, cited by Makaza 2013:6). Using this background, I shall attempt to give a missiological critique of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. The historical links and similarities of doctrinal teachings affect inculturation.

Around 1988 and 1989 doctrinal differences emerged within the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe on whether the church should accept a charismatic strand of teaching and practice in some local churches or not. Five churches namely, Inner City in Harare, now Pinnacle Baptist assemblies; Mkoba 6 in Gweru; Mzilikazi, Ambassador and Luveve churches in Bulawayo, had embraced the charismatic teachings and practices. These practices had been strongly influenced by Reinhard Bonnke and company's crusades held in Zimbabwe (Makaza 2013).

On 17 October 1988, the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe wrote letters of dismissal to the above-mentioned churches. After much deliberation, these churches were expelled from the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe. There were four points for the basis of the removal: The churches were accused of engaging in Neo-Pentecostal practices such as mass prayer, speaking in tongues, conducting healing services by the laying of hands and demon-hunting as shown by the letter. Mass prayer was regarded as a source of confusion during prayer times (See **Appendix 7** for the dismissal letter).

When the churches received the letters, Mkoba 6 responded by declaring the dismembership null and void, citing her reasons. As seen by Mkoba 6 church, the Executive Committee minutes of the 11th and the 12th October 1988 showed that only five members, who did not make up a quorum, approved the motion of discharge. At that time, Rev. L. Payne, Rev. B. Nkonka, Mr. E. Chingono and Rev P.F. Moyo had left the venue of the meeting. Mkoba 6 church also pointed out that whatever they were doing in their respective churches was constitutional especially in line with Article 2 of the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe's constitution. See **Appendix 8** of the letter of response from Mkoba 6. In view of this Article in the constitution, Mkoba 6 and other churches contested their dismissal from the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe. This too forms an important background to the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

The five churches concerned finally realized that the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe was serious about the dismissal after the 1988 Assembly of the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe. The affected

churches met to discuss the formation of a new Convention. They agreed to name the new denomination “National Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe”. An interim committee was then appointed, chaired by Rev P.F. Moyo. The founding pastors were Rev.P.F. Moyo of Mkoba 6, A. Nyathi of Luveve, B. Nkonka of Mzilikazi, L. Payne of Ambassador and G. Muzhombwe of Inner City church (Makaza 2013:7).

The president’s report of the first “historic congress” of the National Baptist Convention held at Mzilikazi, Baptist church in Bulawayo in August 1990 shows that the dismissal from the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe and the consequent formation of the new NBC of Zimbabwe was “not out of choice”. Instead, it was rather forced, and that the leaders were determined to move on with the work of God in a new era. Thus, the NBC of Zimbabwe was formed after five churches were compelled to leave the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe, though they wished to remain members. At the annual Convention ministry departments for the youth, women and men were formed (Makaza 2013). These departments have been meeting annually since that time. This is the background against which I attempt to evaluate the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

2.9 Literature from churches

A substantial amount of literature has been written on the church in general at global, regional and national levels, though not necessarily on the NBC of Zimbabwe.

2.9.1 Literature from Africa

Prom (2013) has a thesis entitled *The inculturation of the Gospel: Implications for the Methodist church the Gambia’s quest for church leadership*. According to Prom (2013:112), in the Gambian Methodist church in West Africa, the marriage rite of passage has been left mostly in the hands of the family and relatives. The church just waits to receive such a couple as engaged and then they are married in church. The minister is invited to attend the traditional customary ritual (Prom 2013:112). Prom (2013) strongly argues for the church to develop an official liturgy that takes into account the customary necessities of the marriage rite of passage in which the Methodist church, rather than just an invited guest, can be an essential part of the ceremony. The question here is whether what Prom (2013) proposed is in line with what is happening in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions in line with the inculturation of marriage rituals.

Linus (2014) has a project entitled, *Liturgical inculturation of traditional marriage preparation and celebration: A challenge for Evangelisation in South-South Nigeria*. Linus says that in the

process of missionary activities and the evangelisation of Calabar and its surrounding areas in South-South Nigeria, missionaries did not take the genuinely human and cultural principles of the indigenous people into account. This is especially so with regard to the importance and sense of the rituals in preparation for and the merriment of the marriage. For Linus (2014), the missionaries considered most of these rituals as irreconcilable with the Christian message and faith.

Linus (2014) goes on to suggest that marriage is one celebration that has established a very severe and challenging pastoral condition for evangelisation and pastoral office. The situation has brought about a battle between traditional marriage festival and the church wedding. Baptised Christians have to undertake double marriage rites, namely the traditional marriage ceremony as well as the church marriage rituals. After the traditional marriage, the couples have to wait for a much-extended time before carrying out a church marriage. This is because they would have spent so much money on the traditional marriage, and therefore do not have enough money to undertake the church wedding. What is painful is that although the community recognise them as husband and wife, the couples participate in the Eucharist without sharing in the Holy Communion. This constitutes a challenge to both pastors and theologians. Therefore, the goal of the project is to show the need for inculturated Christian marriage preparation and celebration.

Lastly, in a book synopsis Okonkwo (2010:1) also points out that traditional marriage and Christian marriage ceremonies presently exist as two distinct rites in some parts of Africa. Okonkwo (2010) goes to ask why there is no way of bringing the two together to avoid any form of duplication or multiplication of rituals. The church has always indirectly recognised the marital institution as a cultural product. Okonkwo (2010) strongly asserts that inculturation is the answer to the above question. The solution to the problem is to establish a marriage ceremony where couples will sincerely experience the happy marriage between culture and church. This marriage rite will fulfil both the traditional and Christian requirements.

2.9.2 Literature from America

2.9.2.1 National Baptist Convention USA, Inc on same sex marriage rituals

In general, there are three varied positions of the churches in as far as the conduct of homosexuality is concerned. As with most issues, there is a diversity of views of church members on same-sex marriages. The three positions are the conservative, the liberal and the neutral positions.¹⁸ This

¹⁸Homosexuality and Baptist churches, from Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia at [en-wikipedia.org/wiki/mo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexuality_and_Baptist_churches).

means that some are more conservative believing in what they regard as “traditional” marriage between one man and one woman. Others are more liberal or moderate in their approaches. It is worth noting that the churches belonging to the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.¹⁹ observe both the conservative and the liberal positions in their marriage rituals.

2.9.2.1.1 Conservative position

National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. released an official position declaration in 2012 that regards marriage as the exclusive joining of a man and a woman²⁰. This means that this Convention believes that a commendable marriage is that done by heterosexuals.

Scruggs (2012:1) reports, “On May 9 2012 our President Barack Obama gave his personal opinion on same-sex marriage. His position is that same-sex partners should have the right to marry as do heterosexual couples and have access to the same benefits”. Scruggs (2012:1) goes on to point out that the National Baptist Convention USA Incorporated does not order its constituent churches what position to take because they believe in the self-government of the local church. Commenting on President Barack Obama’s statement Scruggs (2012:1) said, “While many disagree and others agree with President Obama on the issue of same-sex marriage let it be crystal clear that we are not a one-issue oriented Convention”. Thus, the issue of same-sex marriage is controversial.

The following position statement in 2014, however, banned the Convention’s chaplains from officiating at same-sex marriages or civil unions, stating that they “are not to participate in any activity that implies or condones same-sex marriage or same-sex union”.²¹ This position statement resulted from the fact that on the 26th of June 2013, the Supreme Court of the United States deemed illegal Section 3 of the Defence of Marriage Act (DOMA). The section states that the term “marriage” means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the term “spouse,” denotes a person of the opposite sex, who is a husband or wife. On the 14th of August 2013 the office of Secretary of Defence announced that same gender married couples helping in the military would be permitted to receive all benefits applicable to married couples with effect from 3 September 2013(Scruggs 2014:1).

¹⁹According to en-wikipedia.org/wiki/homosexuality-and-baptist-churches accessed on 07 May 2018 the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. is the second leading Baptist church internationally and predominately African-American.

²⁰ A statement on the same-sex marriage issue, Voting and Christian responsibility. National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. June 2012.

²¹Same sex marriage and related activities National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. January 2014.

It is worth noting that the office of the National Baptist Ecclesiastical Endorser gives recognition to and supports the rights of all people to make social and legal decisions based upon their own personal convictions, knowledge and comprehension of local, state and Federal Law. Therefore, in all matters of Faith and Practice, sacred scriptures guide the National Baptists. In line with this, Genesis 2 verses 18 to 25 portrays God's concern for relations by creating a woman to be a partner with man. Therefore, the National Baptist Endorsed chaplains, although helping in pluralistic circumstances, are not to take part in an action that condones homosexuality (Scruggs 2014:1).

In addition to this, en-wikipedia.org/wiki/homosexuality-andBaptist-churchescite-note10 accessed on 07 May 2018 also declares that in 2006 the National Baptist Convention. USA Inc. stated that a majority of their member churches would cling to their belief that homosexuality is not a legitimate expression of God's will. Hence, these churches were strongly opposed to ordaining active homosexuals or lesbians for any kind of ministry in their church.

A deep analysis of the above-mentioned information reveals that the National Baptist USA. Inc. is conservative in its approach to same-sex marriages. Therefore, I can conclude that what is in the National Baptist USA. Inc. is similar to what is done by the American Baptist churches USA that is a mainline American Baptist denomination. American Baptist churches USA authoritatively describes marriage as the joining of "one man and one woman" and holds that "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching".²²

From the above information, I can say the National Baptist Convention USA. Inc. is conservative on issues to do with homosexuality. Even though the foregoing paragraphs reveal that the National Baptist Convention USA. Inc. is conservative in dealing with same-sex marriages I have also noted that this organisation is at times liberal as shall be discussed in the next section.

2.9.2.1.2 Liberal position

According to en-wikipedia.org/wiki/homosexuality-andBaptist-churchescite-note-10 accessed 07 May 2018 the National Baptist Convention USA. Inc., American Baptist churches, USA and Progressive National Baptist Convention have congregations and ministers who take a liberal

²²American Baptist policy statement on family life, June 1984 cited in Homosexuality and Baptist churches. From Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopaedia at en-wikipedia.org/wiki/homosexuality-andBaptist-churchescite-note-10 accessed 07 May 2018.

position on the issue of same sex marriages.²³ Detroit churches openly accept gay people whilst others would condemn.²⁴

The National Baptist Convention USA, Inc is therefore at times conservative and at times liberal in its approach to same-sex marriages. It makes this organisation markedly different from the church organisations, which believe that the same sex couples should not suffer discrimination because of their sexual orientation.

2.9.2.2 Baptists in the United States

Cowden (2015) has a thesis entitled *Liturgical inculturation among the Baptists in the United States*. This scholar examined liturgical inculturation done by the Baptists in United States. According to him, liturgical inculturation seeks to cultivate worship that is meaningful in the church's context by joining texts and rites with the cultural pattern surrounding the church. In his thesis, Music as a means of inculturation received particular consideration. Together with this, examples of liturgical inculturation among Baptists in the United States are presented, demonstrating the practicality of inculturation for Baptists past and present.

Cowden (2015:103) pointed out that the introduction of instruments into Baptist worship is another historical point of liturgical inculturation. The position of early Baptists in America was part of a long Christian heritage that rejected the use of instrumental music in worship. They gave many reasons, ranging from practical to theological, for refusing to allow instruments in their churches. Cowden (2015:103) also points out that no significant decision was made to introduce instruments until after 1800, and when they finally were brought in they usually were accompanied by disagreement. Congregants who opposed the use of instruments often made their opinions known by exiting the worship space during congregational singing and returning for the sermon. The bass viol was among the first instruments used to support singing in American Baptist worship. The First Baptist Church of Newport, Rhode Island, began using a bass viol just after the turn of the nineteenth century. The First Baptist Church of Providence followed suit in 1804 (Cowden 2015:103). It was introduced in the First Baptist Church of Haverhill, Massachusetts, around 1810; and the First Baptist Church of Boston used one by 1818. The Baptists in the South and West were slower to introduce instruments to accompany congregational singing for financial reasons as well

²³Homosexuality and Baptist churches, from Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia at [en-
ikipedia.org/wiki/homosexuality-and Baptist-churches#cite-note-10](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/homosexuality-and_Baptist-churches#cite-note-10) accessed 07 May 2018.

²⁴ Black Detroit-June 2014 from www.blacdetroit.com Retrieved 04 March 2016

as biblical and theological objections (Cowden 2015:103). Thus, the introduction of musical instruments was a form of liturgical inculturation in the Baptist church as in United States.

The use of instruments is to be assessed in the Convention if they are significant for the NBC of Zimbabwe. Do the Baptists of the Convention use musical instruments? If so, how are they used in the marriage rituals?

2.9.2.3 Literature from outside America

Soosamariam (2006) wrote an article entitled, “Attempt at Inculturation in the Malaysian Church”. Stanislaus Soosamariam is a Malaysian diocesan priest from Kuala Lumpur who organises Basic Christian Communities and makes use of opportunities to integrate cross-cultural symbols into the parish liturgy. Soosamariam (2006) outlined ways by which Malaysian Christians adopt and Christianize religious festivals, rituals and customs.

Inculturation is one of the areas of conflict between Malaysian Christians. In the basic communities, it is normal for people to use cultural elements easily, particularly in events like funerals and marriages when relatives, friends and people of other beliefs visit the family and join in the Catholic rituals. For him the people naturally use familiar symbolic expressions or rituals in those festivities (Soosamariam 2006:1).

Since Malaysia is made up of people of Indian, Chinese and Malay heritage one cannot talk of Malaysian culture. To make matters worse the majority of the Christians in the Catholic Church are converts from Indian and Chinese religions. Some of these live intercultural marriages. According to Soosamariam (2006:1), “A newly wedded Christian woman who moves into her (non-Christian) husband’s household is obliged to encounter a new religious setting and strange custom...”.

Malaysia has the issue of marriage rituals and symbols. One of the symbols is *thali*. *Thali* literally means “string” and is associated with the English expression, “He tied the knot” meaning that a person got married. It is traditionally known as “tying the three knots”. In this case, the bridegroom ties a string with three knots around the bride’s neck using a blessed string decorated with some gold ornaments. Tying the *thali* resembles the practice in the church wedding ceremony in which the couple gives their agreement. Once the *thali* is tied, the marriage is unbreakable. An Indian Catholic marriage never takes place without that *thali* because the tradition has been merged into the Catholic liturgy (Soosamariam 2006:1).

In the Anglican Church there are a number of marriage rituals (Billings: 2014). An Anglican wedding ceremony has a number of steps that can be followed. There is the processional, which is the entry of the bride and her attendants into the church to join the groom and his attendants. There is also the giving away of the bride, whereby the celebrant may ask who brings the woman to be married to the man. After that, there is the preface and the singing of a hymn. This is followed by reading from the Bible.

After that, there is the Homily or wedding address. At that point, the celebrant will normally give a brief address setting out the meaning of marriage and offering words of advice and exhortation to the couple being married. This is followed by a declaration of consent, the vows, the exchange of rings and the declaration made by the celebrant. Then there is the signing of the marriage certificates, the prayers offered for the newly married couple as they begin a new life as husband and wife. There are other optional activities, which include the serving of the Holy Communion and observation of cultural traditions (Billings: 2014).

These works that deal with inculturation of the church in general do not cover the NBC of Zimbabwe. I have scrutinised works from Africa and those outside Africa. Outside Africa I have assessed churches in America and some outside America. These works help me in giving a missiological critique of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

2.10 Literature from NBC of Zimbabwe

2.10.1 Vision and mission of the NBC of Zimbabwe

According to Chabata (2014:4), the vision of the NBC of Zimbabwe is enlarging our borders by making a positive difference in our nation and beyond. This means that as a Convention, she aims to promote meaningful transformation at national, regional and even at international levels. The mission statement is reaching out to the lost with a holistic gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, maturing and multiplying believers through leadership development, church planting and mobilization of resources. In this case, physical, financial and human resources are considered. Hence, in this study I strive to assess how the Convention has inculturated the marriage rituals in line with the vision and mission statements.

2.10.2 Organisational Structure of NBC of Zimbabwe

The operations of the NBC of Zimbabwe are guided by a constitution, which binds members and gives direction as to how member churches should behave and operate. For instance, the NBC of Zimbabwe constitution Article V on membership says,

Every organized Baptist church shall be eligible to become and remain a member of the Convention provided that (a) In the reasonable opinion of the Convention that church upholds the doctrines and objectives of the Convention, and (b) shall have paid its tithes fully up to date...

Thus, the National Assembly (NA) is the decision-making body constituted by representatives from all member churches. It meets once a year to deliberate on Convention issues.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) is also part of the organisational structure of NBC of Zimbabwe. This is the administrative and planning body, with the responsibility of carrying out the directives of the Convention. According to Article ix of the Constitution the NEC shall consist of the President, Vice President, the General Secretary, the Treasurer, the Evangelism and Church Planting Co-coordinator and five ordinary members. All these should be members of the Convention. The Constitution states that all the members of the NEC shall be elected on a yearly basis except the President, General Secretary, the Treasurer, Evangelism and Church Planting Co-ordinator, who shall be elected for a two-year term and may be re-elected for a second two-year term but not exceeding a total of four consecutive years. I make efforts to evaluate how this has been inculturated in line with marriage rituals.

The specific duties of the NEC are to act as the finance committee of the Convention. It deals with all matters of discipline relating to the affairs of the Convention (where requested to do so by the church concerned). The NEC makes efforts to listen the grievances of the members of the Convention. Lastly, it makes a full report of its activities to the subsequent Annual Assembly. Thus, the NEC plays a paramount role in the running of the Convention. The study attempts to scrutinise how these roles could have been affected in line with the inculturation of marriage rituals.

2.10.3 Objectives of the NBC of Zimbabwe

The objectives of the NBC of Zimbabwe are spelt out in the Constitution under Article iii. One of the objectives is to take the whole Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people who do not know it or who have not received it wherever opportunity can be found. This means the NBC of Zimbabwe should aim at planting and developing Christian Churches wherever circumstances permit. This is in line with what is in Acts 1verse 8 where Jesus said to his apostles, “But you shall receive power when

the Holy Spirit has come on you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth...”(NIV)²⁵. Because of this, I strive to examine how soul winning has been inculturated in the marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Strengthening and assisting needy NBC of Zimbabwe churches is also one of the objectives of the Convention as exhibited in Article iii of the constitution. There is provision of love and care for those who are sick in body, mind and soul. Hence, the Convention has the mandate to make stronger and even support those churches that have various constraints. Hence, the study strives to assess how this aspect has been inculturated in the NBC of Zimbabwe with reference to Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

One of the objectives is to encourage and help in the establishment and maintenance of Sunday Bible Study, Bible Study training programme, women’s societies, welfare organisations and similar organisations, as situations may demand. Therefore, in the study I seek to examine how such aspects have been inculturated in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

Finally, the other objective is to afford opportunity for united action concerning matters affecting the welfare of member churches in the Convention. It attempts to promote fellowship with all those who love Jesus Christ and even spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ by means of an Annual Assembly publication of a regular periodical and other literature. Consequently, in the study I endeavour to examine how such aspects have been inculturated in the NBC of Zimbabwe with reference to marriage rituals.

2.10.4 NBC of Zimbabwe beliefs and practices

The present NBC of Zimbabwe has maintained the main Baptist teachings and practices. These have been outlined in the constitution as well. I shall explain them since they play significant roles in the inculturation process of marriage rituals within the Convention.

Firstly, Article ii on Doctrinal Basis posits that the Convention recognises the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God and as the Head of the church. Adding to that, the Bible is regarded as the only authority in all matters relating to Faith and Religious doctrines. Zeolla (1999), who said the Holy Scriptures are authoritative in matters of faith and practice supports this. *Religion Facts* article (2004-2014) has the same notion when it asserts “Authority of the Scriptures or Sola scriptura states that the Bible is the only authoritative source of God’s truth”. In the NBC of Zimbabwe,

²⁵ In this study, I will make use of the *Holy Bible New International Version* for citations.

each church has, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, the freedom to interpret the teachings of the Bible. Every believer is also accountable before God for his or her own comprehension of the Holy Book. Everyone is implored to work out his or her own salvation with fear and trembling. Therefore, my intention is to assess how this aspect has been inculturated in the marriage rituals in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

Protestants are well known for the emphasis on the exposition of the Scriptures in every worship service and a catechism class on the Sunday morning as a heritage of the Reformation (Chadwick 1964:419). In a similar fashion the supremacy of Scriptures is one key distinctive among Baptists, that is, the belief in the plenary inspiration of divine authority of the “Word written” (Hulse 1973:90).

Christian baptism is one of the notable beliefs of NBC of Zimbabwe. According to Article ii, on the Doctrinal basis, “Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of the believer in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem one’s faith in the crucified, buried and risen saviour”. This opinion is supported by the article *Religion Facts* which says believer’s baptism is an ordinance done after someone has professed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is symbolic of the cleansing of sin as well. According to *Religion Facts*, Baptism has no role in salvation. Instead, this is an outward expression of the inward change that has already occurred. The NBC of Zimbabwe reiterates baptism by full immersion, which follows the method employed by John the Baptist. In this case, the Pastor recites Matthew 28 verse 19. This makes it different from other churches where one can be sprinkled with some water as a way of baptism. Others, like Salvation Army, just fly a symbolic flag above the concerned individual to be baptized. Therefore, I attempt to assess how the Christian baptism has been inculturated in the NBC of Zimbabwe in regard to the inculturation of the marriage rituals.

The Lord’s Supper is one of the main beliefs conducted by the NBC of Zimbabwe. This has been defined as a sacred memorial in which members of the church use bread and wine to commemorate together the saving love of Christ. In addition to this, the NBC of Zimbabwe recognises monogamy as the ideal life according to the Bible and strictly follows it. Because of this, I strive to examine how such issues have been inculturated if one takes into consideration polygamy, which is part of Ndebele and Shona cultures.

The priesthood of all believers is part of the belief systems of the NBC of Zimbabwe. This is a view that all believers have equal access to God through the mediator Jesus Christ, meaning that

each person can approach God directly through Jesus Christ and without any human representative, sharply contrasting the Catholic Pope. Maring (1968) observes that the individual soul is deemed competent in religious matters and must be given the freedom to interpret the Scriptures and determine doctrine for himself. This value began to arise early in the Reformation as more reformers pushed for the scriptures to be translated into the common languages of the people.

The article *Religion Facts* (2004-2014) which posits that the priesthood of all believers removes all the hierarchical layers of priests, traditions and authority support this so that all Christians have equal access to God's revelation of faith through the study of the scriptures. The above article points out that this is the position shared by all post-reformation Christian groups. Therefore, I make every effort to assess how this concept has been inculturated in marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Another doctrine held by NBC of Zimbabwe is congregational governance. According to *Religion Facts* (2004-2014), this Congregationalist governance gives the freedom to individual local churches in areas of policy, polity, and doctrine. It is worth noting that the NBC of Zimbabwe is not under the direct administrative control of any other body such as a national council or a leader such as a Bishop, or Pope. The lay members of each individual church decide administration, leadership, and doctrine democratically. According to *Religion Facts* (2004-2014), John Wycliffe and Huldrych Zwingli were strong influences in the development of the opinion of congregationalism. In this study I therefore attempt to examine how this has been inculturated in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

Justification by faith is another doctrine held by the NBC of Zimbabwe. As seen by the article *Religion Facts* (2004-2014) the doctrine of justification by faith declares that believers do not receive salvation through works of their own. The Baptists strongly emphasise the concept of salvation. Baptist theology teaches that humans have been contaminated by the sin of Adam and Eve's rebellion against God and for this reason people are condemned. Jesus Christ died on the cross for people to get eternal life but this requires that each individual accept Christ into his or her life. Therefore, I attempt to assess how this concept has been inculturated in the NBC of Zimbabwe with reference to marriage rituals.

A close examination of the Baptists shows that they have a number of distinctives from the Reformation. Maring (1963:15) asserts that it so simple to identify the characteristics marks of Baptists and he notes the blurring, modification and distortion of theory and practices throughout

the centuries of growth and development in the Baptist identity. According to Motsi, (1991:6) four “distinctives” seem prominent among the Baptists. These are the Bible as the final authority in individual and church decisions; the New Testament as the doctrine of the church; believers’ baptism upon confession of faith alone; and the autonomy of the local church. The NBC of Zimbabwe Christian culture in this study has to inculturate the Shona and Ndebele marriage rituals into this framework.

2.11 Summary

Overall, in the foregoing sections I scrutinised the context analysis of the NBC of Zimbabwe. I have analysed the historical dimensions and structural elements of the NBC of Zimbabwe. I also analysed the local, regional, national and international level of the NBC of Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the dimension of faith and religious dimensions of traditions that represent that faith was delineated. On social analysis, I discussed the African context of the marriage rituals. I also delineated the Zimbabwean context of marriage rituals in general. I outlined the history of the NBC of Zimbabwe. I assessed literature from churches and from the NBC of Zimbabwe. Through this, I established the fact that the NBC of Zimbabwe is linked to the origin and development of the Baptist Church in general, and the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe. The beliefs and practices of the NBC of Zimbabwe have also been outlined to lay a background to the phenomena of inculturation of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe. The next chapter 3 scrutinises the context analysis of the marriage rituals among the NBC of Zimbabwe church members.

CHAPTER 3: SURVEY ON MARRIAGE RITUALS AMONG THE NBC OF ZIMBABWE CHURCH MEMBERS

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter I survey the marriage rituals among the NBC church members in accordance with the context analysis of the four phase pastoral cycle. I will consider the marriage rituals in the NBC churches. Furthermore, I delineate the dimension of faith and religious dimensions of traditions that represent that faith.

3.1 Payment of lobola/ bride price

From the questionnaire, interview and observation results from various churches A, B, C, D, E and F, I noted that one of the marriage practices in the churches is payment of bride price. Shona and Ndebele believers observe in this case marrying someone whose background is known. In Shona culture, they use a proverb, which says *Rooreranai vamatongo*, whilst in Ndebele culture they say *Ukhuni olungaziwayo kaluthezwa*. Both the Shona and Ndebele respondents pointed that in the churches there is payment of a bride price or lobola called *roora* in Shona language or *amalobolo* in Ndebele language in the churches.

This is in line with what Gombe (2000), Thorpe (1996) and others outlined. According to these scholars, a man marrying from the Shona culture had to observe the payment of lobola called *roora* in Shona. This was done during the process of the Shona wedding ceremony. This was an exhibition or sign of love and affection when a man saves up and marries his beloved. In Zimbabwe, *roora* happens in various stages. Each stage has its own traditions and small amounts to pay. The processes vary from area to area because in the Shona culture there are twelve different ethnic groups (<https://makupsy.wordpress.com2014/11/lobola-procedures> accessed 17-06-16).

In line with various stages, I noted that after the parents of the boy notice that the two really want to be married, they have to look for an intermediary (*munyai/ dombo*) in Shona or *Usodombo* in the Ndebele language. This person becomes a go-between of the two different families. Through the go-between, the girls' parents ask for a hoe (*badza*) and *makandinzwanani* where they will be saying, "Who told you about me having a daughter? (Mawere and Mawere 2010:226). Thus, I have established that the payment of a bride price (*roora*) is critical within the Shona traditional culture.

The second stage is when the list of groceries is given to the bridegroom prior to the wedding ceremony. The third stage is the preparations of the payment when the bride's family would ask

for a wooden plate (*ndiro*) from the intermediary. Once the plate has been provided a process called “*sunungurahomwe*,” meaning loosen pockets or “*vhuramuromo*” meaning opening mouth is done. A small fee for the greeting of the guests is paid (<https://makupsy.wordpress.com/2014/11/lobola-procedures> accessed 17-06-16).

The fourth stage is the payments stage, which is composed of numerous stages, which may take many days to complete. In this case gifts for the father (*zvireverere zvababa*) should be paid. It has been pointed out that the key payment is the *matekenyandebvu*, to acknowledge the bride’s father for the pulling of the beard as his daughter sat on his knee as a child. In addition to this, gifts for the mother (*zvireverere zvamai*) are paid. In the past these included *mbereko* for carrying the bride in a pouch when she was still a baby as well as *Mafukidzadumbu*, for covering of the belly of the mother (<https://makupsy.wordpress.com/2014/11/lobola-procedures> accessed 17-06-16).

Together with this, in the Shona wedding ceremony there is the stage of the live goat (*Mbudzi yedare*), which is slaughtered during the payment process. This is served after the completion of the wedding ritual. The other stage is the gifts of the bride. In this case, the woman to be married would pick some money from the plate. In certain areas, the aunt sets this type of money.

The father would also ask for a certain amount of bride price (*pfuma*) called *rugaba /rusambo* which is meant to cover the heavy responsibility the parent underwent in raising the daughter. The intermediary is also asked for a head of cattle (*danga*) (Mawere and Mawere 2010:226; Gombe 2000: 104). This stage traditionally is a gift of cattle. Normally the number of beasts may range between eight and ten. This can be paid in the form of equivalent cash nowadays. In this case, the father of the girl gets his own bull (*mhindura*) which is dedicated to the paternal spirits. On the other hand, the mother of the girl gets her most valued beast (*mombe yeumai*) (Mawere and Mawere 2010:227; Gombe 2000:106). This beast is dedicated to the maternal spirits as well.

The time and conduct of lobola ritual caused some controversy among the churches in my study, as revealed by the interview and observation results. I noted that although the two cultures encourage upholding marriage cultural rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe my observation is that there is a controversy among the Shona and Ndebele respondents on the time and the conduct of lobola within the NBC of Zimbabwe. The debate is over the period to conduct marriage activities. One of the groups supports the idea whilst the other group seems to be against the conduct of the marriage during the month of November, a month regarded as sacred in both Shona and Ndebele cultures.

Although payment of lobola may be commendable at times it becomes expensive and oppressive. Some Ndebele people seem to hold the view that the lobola from the Shona people is a bit expensive, since in these days some have commercialised payment of lobola. Therefore, from such views I have established that payment of lobola is a bit controversial. Some regard payment of lobola as expensive and oppressive. However, another group believes that one could conduct a marriage ritual during any time of the year including November, since they are living in New Testament times with a new covenant.

Black women theologians like Purity Malinga and others reject the payment of lobola, saying that it enhances violence against women (Landman 2000:185). At a research meeting of the Faculty of Theology and Religion, at Unisa, Purity Malinga declared that lobola is one of the reasons for violence against black women, since it reduces women to the property of men. Kobo (2016) remarks that when Purity Malinga made that statement the black men in the conference accused her, arguing against women for using feminism to divide black into male and female. This shows that some black women theologians are against the payment of lobola. Payment of lobola therefore is a controversial issue.

3.2 *Kusungira* ritual

The *Kusungira* ritual is one of the marriage practices in the churches observed by the Shona believers. I have observed that some of the NBC of Zimbabwe Shona believers conduct the *kusungira* ritual during the first pregnancy of a woman. This is, however, a controversial ritual in the church. Some members believe that the ritual should be conducted because that woman would get guidance and counselling on how to handle the newly born baby. Another group is strongly against such an idea, saying as Christians they are living under a new covenant, therefore such Shona and Ndebele cultural laws do not bind them. In addition to this, a woman may be given herbs (*masuo*) to open the birth canal.

In line with the above mentioned *kusungira* ritual done by the Shona, the NBC of Zimbabwe Ndebele members conduct it in a different manner. In this case, the members do not use the term *kusungira* ritual as perceived by the Shona members. I noted that in the Convention the pregnant person is also taken to her home area so that she gets some guidance and counselling on how to handle the newly born baby. In this ritual the woman is taken to her home area accompanied by a goat (*imbuzi yesitshebo*), which is slaughtered for relish. After giving birth, there is a process of heat therapy (*ukuthoba*) on the stomach, backbone, thighs and any other part of the body affected

during childbirth. That is basically done to relieve the stretched muscles of the woman. A cloth is also tied around the stomach of that woman. That is done in the evening when she retires.

Among the NBC of Zimbabwe Shona members there is also an application of traditional medicines on the newly born baby to protect and strengthen him or her. Some of the herbs are applied to the head of the new baby (*kurapa nhova*). Other herbs are tied around the neck and waist to strengthen the baby. This is similar to tying a charm around the waist and neck of the baby (*intebe*) as done by the Ndebele.

Above all, the other objective of the *masungiro* ritual is directed at the mother-in-law, who should confirm to her ancestral spirits that she is quite happy and then appeal to them to guide her daughter in giving birth safely. The pregnant daughter remains behind so that if there were any problems the mother would give assistance and even appeal to the ancestral spirits to intervene where necessary.

3.3 Ukucola ritual

In addition to the above mentioned ritual, some Ndebele conduct *ukucola* ritual in churches. I have observed that such a marriage ritual is a bit controversial when one considers how this ritual is conducted. For instance, there is use of bile (*Inyongo*) on the participants as a way of strengthening the relationship. In this ritual a pregnant woman who visits the suitor's family is sprinkled with bile (*inyongo*) from a goat. In this ritual, the remainder of the bile from the goat, is tied on *usanyongwana*. In this case; *usanyongwana* is a mature young sister of the pregnant girl, who would have accompanied the pregnant woman to her suitor's family. The relatives of the suitor conduct the ritual as a way of appreciating the pregnancy. This is called *ukugqizisa* in Ndebele language.

3.4 Wedding ceremony

Moreover, I observed that a wedding ceremony is one of the marriage ritual conducted in churches. The wedding is called *muchato* in the Shona language, whilst in the Ndebele language it is called *umtshado*. A wedding ceremony is held if the groom has paid part or the full bride price or lobola. The wedding ceremonies are conducted after negotiations or payment of the bride price has been made. Introductions and marriage bans are made to the NBC of Zimbabwe members after the consent of the parents or guardians. During the wedding ceremony, a parent or a guardian hands over the bride to the groom during the marriage ceremonies.

3.5 Initiation rituals

Initiation rituals are conducted. Church leaders like elders and deacons conduct these in the churches especially the youth advisors. If the aunts and uncles are in the churches, they also play such a role. The youths, men and women received a lot of guidance and counselling during church services, conferences and organised meetings. The brides-to-be and grooms-to-be received guidance and counselling during the bridal parties and bachelor's parties. Those in marriages received it from pastors, elders and deacons within the NBC of Zimbabwe. The pastor, elders and even deacons within the NBC of Zimbabwe, were now complementing the roles of the aunts and uncles in the Shona and Ndebele culture. This is done to young men and women in preparation of marriages so that they become good husbands and wives. This is similar to the initiation rituals conducted by aunts and uncles in the Shona and Ndebele culture in preparation of marriages as well.

3.6 Introductions of the bride and groom to the relatives (*Kundoonekwa kwemusikana /mukomana kuhamu* (Shona)/ *Ukuvela* (Ndebele))

In the NBC churches, a Shona or Ndebele man /woman who intends to get married should visit the family of his or her girlfriend or boyfriend before the official marriage. When that is done the elders, deacons and youth leaders play a leading role of accompanying the bride-to-be or groom-to-be to meet the relatives. This gives the bride-to-be an opportunity to meet the family and relatives of the groom to-be so that she familiarizes with them. The groom-to-be also gets an opportunity to meet the family and relatives of the bride-to-be so that he familiarizes with them as well.

3.7 Ululation, clapping of hands and offering of gifts

I have observed that some of the marriage practices performed in the churches are that of ululation, clapping of hands and offering of gifts during the conduct of marriage ceremonies, bridal parties and bachelor's parties. I noted that that among the Convention Shona members when a bride is sent off for marriage she is given gifts like mortar (*duri*), sleeping mat (*rupasa*), sweeping broom (*mutsvairo*) and some kitchen utensils such as plates (*ndiro*), pots (*mapoto*) and many other items which she is supposed to use in her new home. On the other hand, the Convention Ndebele members a bride is given a sleeping mat (*ixansi*), harvesting basket (*ingcebethu*), and sweeping broom (*umthanyelo*) to use in her new home as well. More so, during the church wedding ceremony there was a lot of ululation and dancing. Furthermore, many gifts were given to bless the couple who wedded.

3.8 Summary

In this survey of marriage rituals that are held by members of the churches of the NBC of Zimbabwe, I have established that many rituals can be observed. This was done in line with the context analysis of the four phase pastoral cycle/ praxis cycle. In the next chapter I focus on data analysis of conducted survey. In this chapter, I carefully analyse the responses into the survey's specific tendencies of members and church officials. Their agreements and disagreements are delineated.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS OF CONDUCTED SURVEY

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the quantitative and qualitative data collected using questionnaires, interviews and observations. This corresponds to the context analysis of the four phase pastoral cycle or praxis cycle. I analyse the responses to show the survey's specific tendencies of members and church officials. Their agreements and disagreements are also spelt out. I discuss the data against the questions posed in chapter one in order to highlight the salient issues pertinent to this study. The research findings are presented in the form of tables corresponding to themes for the missiological critique of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. I will therefore attempt to answer the following questions based on the framework of Kritzinger's seven dimensions: **1) Agency:** Who are the agents/leaders who work towards inculturation? What is their position vis-à-vis the rest of the NBC of Zimbabwe? What are their views on inculturation? **2) Contextual understanding:** What are the factors that influence the agents and the society/church members who are affected by this inculturation? What are the contexts of the members of the NBC of Zimbabwe? How do the Shona and Ndebele respondents perceive inculturation of marriage rituals in the Convention from their context? **3) Ecclesial scrutiny:** What are/were the marriage practices in the churches? What kind of inculturation could facilitate greater engagement between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and the Ndebele cultures? What are the barriers to the practice of such aspects in the Convention? **4) Biblical tradition:** How do the leaders and the members interpret the Bible vis-à-vis marriage practices? What would be an appropriate spirituality for Inculturating marriage practices? **5) Discernment for action:** What actions are taken to inculturate marriage practices? What causes the blending of these aspects in this Convention? **6) Reflexivity:** Is there any reflection from leaders and members on the impact of the inculturation of marriage practices? What are some of the aspects of Shona and Ndebele cultures that have been fused with the NBC of Zimbabwe? Which are the possible benefits of these to the Convention members? **7) Spirituality:** What type of spirituality is practiced by the leaders/members that underscore the inculturation of the marriage rituals? Before attending to these aspects of inculturation, I will explain the coding system that I apply when presenting and analysing interview and observation results.

The coding system used in the study

This presentation is punctuated with quoted statements from the participants in order to authenticate the findings. In an effort to present the quotations, I used codes for referencing purposes. The codes I used are shown below:

Code system (i): Coding used in the study of churches, pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members and lay members

Name of a church	Pastor	Elder	Deacon	Church committee member	Lay
A	A1	.....	.....	A4	.....
B	B1	B2	.....	.....	B5
C	C1	C2	.....	.....	C5
D	.....	D2	D3	.....	.....
E	.....	.....	E3	.....	.....
F	.....	.....	.....	F4	.....

Code system (i) above shows that all the six churches studied and the interviewees in the study were given pseudonyms A, B, C, D, E and F respectively. Each participant from a church was numbered in ascending order per church and position for ease of identification. The numerals show the position of that interviewee in the church. For instance, 1 is for pastors, 2 for elders, 3 for deacons, 4 for church committee members and 5 was for lay members interviewed. The pastors were given pseudonyms pastor A1, B1 and C1. Elders were given pseudonyms like B2, C2, and D2. The deacons were coded D3 and E3; church committee members were coded A4 and F4; Lay members were coded B5 and C5. In the study this shows that pastor A1 comes from church A and is number 1 in the church, whilst elder B2 comes from church B and is number 2 in that church. In this case, the letter of the alphabet would be identifying interviewee with the name of his or her church and the position he or she occupied. These were then transcribed in preparation for data presentation and analysis. Each participant was numbered in ascending order for ease of identification.

Code system (ii): Coding system used in the study of three National Executive Members.

Description	Code
National Executive Number 1	NEM1
National Executive Number 2	NEM2
National Executive Number 3	NEM3

Code system (ii) shows the pseudonyms given to three National Executive Members. These are NEM1, NEM2 and NEM3. In this case, NEM1 represents National Executive Member number 1, NEM2 represents National Executive Member number 2, whilst NEM3 represents National Executive Member number 3.

All the interviews for code systems (i) and (ii) were voice recorded in a numerical and ascending order from the first to the last one with the interview date. For example, Interview 1, 14 November 2016. These were then transcribed in preparation for data presentation and analysis. Each participant from a church was numbered in ascending order per church and position for ease of identification whilst for National Executive Members this was based on positions only. As such the interviewee would be labelled, Elder D2 (Interview 1, 14 November 2016, or Pastor B1 (Interview 4, 17 November 2016). Only fifteen people were interviewed.

4.1 Demographic data of respondents

I will present the demographic characteristics of the respondents in this section in line with Kritzinger's dimensions of **agency** (Banda 2010:128). In accordance with the dimension of agency, I will analyse the data to determine which demographic variables correlate best with participants' responses to the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Their position vis-à-vis the rest of the NBC of Zimbabwe will be delineated. I have identified the following variables that I think will affect the outcome. The demographic variables in the analysis are gender, age, position, and experience in a position, highest academic qualifications, highest professional qualifications and years of experience as a member of the NBC of Zimbabwe. This is in line with Wyse (2012:1) who said, "Characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, education, profession, occupation, income level and marital status are all typical examples of demographics that are used in surveys...".

I present the respondents' demographics in tables, and discuss the background information to explain each of the aspects of inculturation presented in this study.

The demographic data that I analyse in this section is for the following questionnaire respondents: three (3) National Executive Members, six (6) pastors, twelve (12) elders, fifteen (15) deacons, seventeen (17) church committee members and fifty-three (53) lay members of the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. The participants are from the Shona and Ndebele cultures. One hundred and twenty-five (125) questionnaires were distributed to respondents and one hundred and six (106) were returned, giving an eighty-six percent (86%) return rate. This response rate is good enough to give generalised conclusions (Fincham 2008:1). According to Fincham (2008:1), "There are now higher expectations for survey response rates. Response rates approximating 60% for most research should be the goal of researchers...". Only nineteen (19) questionnaires, which is sixteen percent (16%) of the lot sent out, were not returned. I made several follow-ups but no response came. In addition to this I had to conduct interviews and make observations as well. The upcoming section presents this material in accordance with Kritzinger's dimension of **Agency**.

4.1.1 Gender

The first question on demographics of the population sample concerned the gender of the respondents. I considered gender since culture among Black African people, in at least Southern Africa, is strongly "arranged" according to gender roles and hierarchies between genders and different age groups. This was done because this has significant impact on how women and men perceive culture as it intersects religion. The gender of my respondents therefore affects how the inculturation of marriage rituals would take place within the NBC of Zimbabwe. After the investigation, I then present results in table 4.1.

Table 4:1 Distribution of respondents according to gender (N=106)

Gender	Shona		Ndebele		Grand Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	26	24.5	15	14.1	41	38.7
Female	29	27.4	36	34.0	65	61.3
Total	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

Table 4.1 above shows that 26 (24.5%) of the Shona respondents were males, whilst 29 (27.4%) were females. At the same time 15 (14.1%) of the Ndebele respondents were males, whilst 36 (34.0%) were females. Thus, 65 (61.3%) of the respondents were females, whilst 41 (38.7%) were males. The majority of females' respondents provided more information on the research study in line with the inculturation of marriage rituals as compared to males.

4.1.2 Age

In the second question on demographics, I wanted to establish the age of the respondents. In this case, I tried to establish age of my respondents because opinions on a vast number of topics differ between different age groups. The ages of respondents affect how the inculturation of marriage rituals would take place within the NBC of Zimbabwe. In order to establish the ages of the population sample under study, I investigated the age ranges. The results are presented in table 4.2.

Table 4:2 Distribution of respondents according to age (N=106)

Age distribution	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
20-29	4	3.8	3	2.8	7	6.6
30-39	16	15.1	15	14.2	31	29.3
40-49	23	21.7	20	18.9	43	40.6
50-59	9	8.5	8	7.5	17	16.0
60-69	3	2.8	5	4.7	8	7.5
70-79	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	55	51.9%	51	48.1	106	100%

Table 4.2 above shows that 7 (6.6%) of the respondents were aged between twenty and twenty nine years, 31 (29.3%) fell in the range of thirty to thirty nine years , and 43 (40.6%) had ages between forty and forty nine. Moreover, 17 (16.0%) had ages between fifty and fifty nine, whilst

8 (7.5%) were aged between sixty and sixty nine. None of the respondents were aged between seventy and seventy nine. From the information above, I concluded that the age was well distributed. The above table also shows that the respondents were mature enough to provide sound responses on the research study on the inculturation of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

4.1.3 Position in church

In the third question on demographics, I intended to establish the position of the respondents in the church. In this case, I tried to establish the position in church of my respondents because opinions on most topics differ again between different positions in church. The position of the respondents affects how the inculturation of marriage rituals would occur within the NBC of Zimbabwe. In order to establish the position in church of the Shona and Ndebele respondents under study, I investigated their positions in church. The results are presented in table 4.3.

Table 4:3 Distribution of respondents according to position in church (N=106)

Position distribution in church	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand total N=106	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
National Executive Member	2	1.9	1	0.9	3	2.8
Pastor	1	0.9	5	4.7	6	5.6
Elder	9	8.5	3	2.8	12	11.3
Deacon	6	5.7	9	8.5	15	14.2
Church Committee Member	8	7.5	9	8.5	17	16.0
Lay	29	27.4	24	22.6	53	50.0
Total	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

Table 4.3 above shows that 3 (2.8%) of the respondents were National Executive members, whilst 6 (5.6%) were pastors. 12 (11.3%) were elders and 15 (14.2%) were deacons. In addition to this, 17 (16.0%) were church committee members, whilst 53 (50%) were lay members. From this, I concluded that the Shona and Ndebele respondents had a great potential to give a meaningful

assessment related to the study since the population sample was made up of respondents whose position in the church was varied.

4.1.4 Experience in leadership position

In the fourth question on demographics, I sought to establish the experience in the leadership position of the respondents. In this case, I attempted to establish the experience in the leadership positions in church of my respondents because opinions on many topics differ between different experiences in positions. The experience in the position of the respondents would affect how the inculturation of marriage rituals would take place within the NBC of Zimbabwe. In order to establish the experience in position of the Shona and Ndebele respondents under study, I investigated their experience in a given position. The results are presented in table 4.4.

Table 4:4 Distribution of Shona and Ndebele respondents according to experience in position (N=106)

Experience in position in years	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand Total N=106	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1-5 years	15	14.2	15	14.1	30	28.3
6-10 years	12	11.3	11	10.4	23	21.7
11-15 years	6	5.7	4	3.8	10	9.4
16-20 years	8	7.5	2	1.9	10	9.4
21-25 years	10	9.4	12	11.3	22	20.7
26-30 years	4	3.8	7	6.6	11	10.4
Total	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

Table 4.4 above shows that 30 (28.3%) had experience in position of one to five years, 23 (21.7%) had experience in position of six to ten years, whilst 10 (9.5%) had experience in position of eleven to fifteen years. Another group of 10 (9.4%) had experience in position of sixteen to twenty years. Furthermore, 22 (20.7%) had experience in position of twenty-one to twenty-five years, and 11 (10.4 %) had experience in position of twenty-six to thirty years. Thus, I concluded that the Shona and Ndebele respondents had the great potential of giving sound responses in my research study on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

4.1.5 Highest academic qualifications

In the fifth question on demographics, I sought to establish the highest academic qualifications of the respondents. I had to find the highest academic qualifications of my respondents because more often than not there are clear differences in opinions between respondents with different educational levels. The highest academic qualifications of the respondents affect how the inculturation of marriage rituals would happen within the NBC of Zimbabwe. I investigated their highest academic qualifications and the results are presented in table 4.5.

Table 4:5 Distribution of respondents according to highest academic qualifications (N=106)

Highest academic qualifications	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand Total N=106	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Z.J.C	5	4.7	4	3.8	9	8.5
O-Level/Grade 11	9	8.5	16	15.1	25	23.6
A-Level	20	18.9	12	11.3	32	30.2
B.A/BSc.	16	15.1	16	15.1	32	30.2
MA/MSc/MBA	5	4.7	3	2.8	8	7.5
PhD.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Any other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

Table 4.5 above shows that nine (8.5%) of the respondents had Zimbabwe Junior Certificates (Z.J.C) as the highest academic qualification, 25 (23.6%) had O-level or Grade 11 qualifications, whilst 32 (30.2%) had A-level qualifications. Together with this, 8 (7.5%) had Masters of Arts or Masters of Science or Masters in Business Administration degree qualifications. No one had a doctoral degree or any other qualification. From this, I established that the respondents were educated and therefore they had a great potential to pass meaningful decisions related to the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

4.1.6 Highest professional qualifications

In the sixth question on demographics, I intended to establish the highest professional qualifications of the respondents. I had to find the highest professional qualifications of my respondents because more often than not there are clear differences in opinions between respondents with a different educational level. The highest professional qualifications of the respondents affect how the inculturation of marriage rituals would occur within the NBC of Zimbabwe. The results are presented in table 4.6.

Table 4:6 Distribution of respondents according to highest professional qualifications (N=106)

Highest professional qualifications	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Teacher Education Certificate	1	0.9	2	1.9	3	2.8
Technical National Certificate	4	3.8	1	0.9	5	4.7
Teacher Education Diploma	5	4.7	9	8.5	14	13.2
Technical National Diploma	7	6.6	7	6.6	14	13.2
BEd/BCom.	6	5.7	6	5.7	12	11.3
Med	8	7.5	5	4.7	13	12.3
Grad. C.E.	12	11.3	8	7.5	20	18.9
PhD	2	1.9	0	0	2	1.9
Any other	0	0	0	0	0	0
None	10	9.4	13	12.3	23	21.7
Total	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

Table 4.6 above shows that 3 (2.8%) of the respondents had Teacher Education Certificates as the highest professional qualification, whilst 5 (4.7%) had Technical National Certificates. Another group of 14 (13.2%) had Diplomas in Teacher Education and 14 (13.2%) had Technical National Diplomas. 12 (11.3%) had Bachelor of Education or Bachelor of Commerce degrees. 20 (18.9%

had Graduate Certificates in Education, 2 (1.9%) had doctoral degrees, whilst 23 (21.7%) had no professional qualifications and no one had any other professional qualification. From the above data I observed that the members who had doctoral degrees had decided to further up their professional side instead of their academic side. Since the majority of the respondents had professional qualifications, I therefore concluded that a significant contribution as to the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in Midlands and Matabeleland regions could be provided.

4.1.7 Period of membership in the church

In the seventh question on demographics, I intended to establish the period of membership of the respondents. The period of membership of the respondents affects how the inculturation of marriage rituals would take place in the NBC of Zimbabwe. The results are presented in table 4.7.

Table 4:7 Distribution of respondents according to period of membership in NBC of Zimbabwe (N=106)

Period of membership	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand Total N=106	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1-10 Years	16	15.1	15	14.1	31	29.2
11-20 Years	16	15.1	9	8.5	25	23.6
21-30 Years	23	21.7	27	25.5	60	47.2
Total	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

Table 4.7 above shows that 31 (29.2 %) of the respondents had period of membership ranging from one to ten years, 25 (23.6%) had eleven to twenty years, whilst 60 (47.) had twenty-one to thirty years of experience. With this information, I then concluded that they were well informed about the phenomena of the inculturation of marriage rituals. Thus, the respondents could provide logical and well-founded decisions on the inculturation process of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe.

4.2 Presentation of responses on the inculturation of marriage rituals

Following the dimension of **Agency**, I examined the following question: What are their views on inculturation? In this section, I present the data in line with the responses I got through the

questionnaires, interviews and the observations. I use frequency tables, bar graphs and pie charts to present the data.

4.2.1 Use of marriage cultural aspects at the time one became a member

In order to establish the use of the cultural aspects at the time one became a member I investigated whether the cultural aspects were used in the church at the time the respondents joined the church. The results are presented in table 4.8 and bar graph 1.

Table 4:8 Distribution of respondents on the usage of cultural aspects at the time one became a member. (N=106)

Use of cultural aspects	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand Total N=106	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	50	47.2	49	46.2	99	93.4
No	5	4.7	2	1.9	7	6.6
Total	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

Figure 4 Bar Graph 1: Distribution of respondents on the usage of cultural aspects at the time one became a member

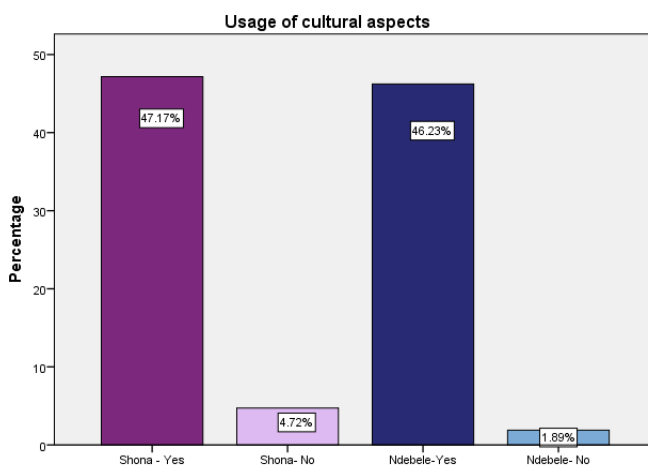


Table 4.8 and Bar Graph 1 show that 50 (47.2%) of the Shona respondents agreed that there was use of Shona cultural aspects in the NBC of Zimbabwe at the time they became members. At the same time the above table 5.8 and bar graph 1 also show that 49 (46.2%) of the Ndebele

respondents concurred that aspects of Ndebele were used in the NBC of Zimbabwe at the time they became members. Thus, from the above data 99 (93.4%) of both Shona and Ndebele population sample they both agreed that some aspects of their culture were used in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies. Thus, a majority of both the Shona and Ndebele respondents thought that some practices of Shona and Ndebele were used at the time they became members of the NBC of Zimbabwe. Thus, there was a degree of inculturation of marriage rituals at the time the respondents became members of the NBC of Zimbabwe.

On the other hand, Table 4.8 and Bar graph 1 show that 7 (6.6%) of the Shona and Ndebele respondents thought that there was no use of the cultural aspects of marriage in the NBC of Zimbabwe at the time they became members. Five (4.7%) of the Shona respondents indicated that there was no use of Shona cultural aspects, whilst 2 (1.9%) of the Ndebele respondents indicated that there was no use of aspects of Ndebele culture. Those who disregarded the idea were perhaps not aware of the manifestation of those cultural aspects at the time they became members in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Pastor BI from Matabeleland in Bulawayo city (Interview 4, 17 November 2016) confirmed this, saying

Yes, there was use of Ndebele cultural aspects in this church when I became a member in 1990, because every young man who wanted to wed in church was supposed to have paid bride price (*amalobolo*) to the parents of the woman. Failure to do that the wedding would not be conducted in the church.

The above response shows that the payment of bride price has been practised in the church as far back as from 1990 up to now. Pastor A1 (Interview 7, 8 December 2016) from Midlands in Gweru town agreed, saying,

When I became a member of the NBC of Zimbabwe, the use of Shona cultural aspects in marriage rituals was there. I remember that in 1992 my brother had to pay eight heads of cattle as part of the bride price for him to wed in the church. The church leaders were even in support of such a move saying this was part of our Shona culture, which should be followed in church.

The above two responses were supported by deacon E3 (Interview 15, 31 January 2017) who said,

The Shona cultural ritual of sending a woman to her home area during her first pregnancy for a *kusungira* ritual has been in existence in the NBC of Zimbabwe in 1991. The church leaders were in support of that because they were of the idea that my wife would get guidance and counselling on how to handle the new baby from her parents and relatives since that was her first pregnancy. The church leaders never cautioned me in line with that.

Therefore, from the above responses I concluded that aspects of Shona and Ndebele marriage cultural aspects in the NBC of Zimbabwe went as far back as 1990.

However, a Church Committee member F4 (Interview 14, 23 January 2017) disagreed with the above views saying,

No, from the time I became a member in 2014 I have not seen any of the Shona and Ndebele marriage cultural aspects being used in the NBC of Zimbabwe. In actual fact some of those cultural aspects involve veneration of ancestral spirits which is against our church doctrine.

National Executive Member NEM3 (Interview 13, 23 January 2017) supported the above view saying,

In the NBC of Zimbabwe, we do not use Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects because some of the aspects involve consultation of witchdoctors. For instance, I have observed that some Shona people consult witchdoctors if they fail to have children, Matthew 7 verse 7 says, “Keep on asking and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking and you will find.

From such responses, I concluded that the respondents said there was no use of aspects of Shona or Ndebele culture, since they believed in a merciful God who is omnipotent and omniscient. They probably feared that the NBC of Zimbabwe would be accused of syncretism. Anthony (2012:243) has pointed out that distrust for things African has been noted to be a challenge to the implementation of inculturation.

What the church committee member gave is in line with Pruitt (2007:23) who says, “The chief concern levelled at the advocacy of the inculturation process is the perceived danger of syncretism...” Helmer Ringgren (1996) defined syncretism as “...any mixture of two or more religions...” (Pruitt 2007:23). Considering the above definition one can say in this study syncretism can be described as when Christianity within the NBC of Zimbabwe clothed with Jewish culture is combined with Ndebele and Shona culture in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

4.2.2 Roles of Shona and Ndebele culture in the NBC of Zimbabwe

Considering the dimension of contextual understanding, I posed the following questions: What are the factors that influence the agents and the society/church members affected by this inculturation? What is the context of the members of the NBC of Zimbabwe as Shonas and Ndebeles? How do the respondents perceive inculturation in the Convention from their context? The results are presented in table 4.9.

Table 4:9 Distribution of respondents on roles of cultures in NBC of Zimbabwe in line with marriage rituals (N=106)

Roles of culture	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand Total N=106	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Encourage upholding marriage cultural rituals.	16	15.1	18	17.0	34	32.1
Basis for good marriages	20	18.8	12	11.4	32	30.2
Guidance and counselling	15	14.2	13	12.3	28	26.4
Promotes unity between the Convention and unbelievers	4	3.8	4	3.8	8	7.6
Total	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

Table 4.9 shows that Shona and Ndebele respondents indicated that their cultures played various roles in the marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe. I will discuss the specific roles in the next segment.

4.2.2.1 Encourage upholding marriage cultural rituals

Table 4.9 above shows that 34 (32.1%) of the respondents thought that the Shona and Ndebele cultures played the roles of encouraging upholding of marriage cultural rituals. I observed that 16 (15.1%) of the Shona and 18 (17.0 %) of the Ndebele respondents thought that culture promotes upholding marriage rituals. In this case, the Ndebele culture ensures the payment of bride price (*amalobolo*) in line with the marriage rituals, the Shona culture also ensures the payment of the bride price (*roora*). So, 34 (32.1%) of the Shona and Ndebele respondents show that culture promotes the upholding of marriage cultural rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Most of the interview results I got in the month of December 2017 supported the above view. For instance, Pastor A1 (Interview 7, 8 December 2016) from Gweru in Midlands said,

The Shona culture can be seen as a model of contextualisation. It can be perceived as a pattern in which the character of contemporary Christianity can manifest itself. Together with this, the Shona culture can be viewed as an attempt to translate the Christian faith into a specific culture, the culture of the African church.

What was asserted by Pastor A1 (Interview 7, 8 December 2016) was supported by a Ndebele Church Committee member A4 (Interview 8, 8 December 2016) who said,

The Church in the NBC of Zimbabwe should be the Church, which affords the Ndebele people the means of worshipping God as Ndebeles. This is a way, which is compatible with their own spiritual character, of singing to the glory of God in their own way. As Ndebele people we have our own way of conducting marriage rituals which greatly appeals to us. For instance, we dance, clap hands and ululate during the conduct of a marriage ceremony.

Pastor BI (Interview 4, 17 December 2017) from Bulawayo supported this, saying that the payment of bride price is strongly encouraged by Shona and Ndebele cultures in the NBC of Zimbabwe. According to Pastor BI (Interview 4, 17 December 2017),

In the NBC of Zimbabwe, the bride and groom will not be married in the church if they have not paid part or the whole bride price demanded by the parents or guardian of the bride. In this case, an intermediary plays a paramount role of ensuring that this has happened. The intermediary (*Usodombo/umkhongi*) helps in uniting the two families who are to be married. All this is in line with Matthew 18 verses 15- 17.

Church committee member F4 (Interview 14, 23 January 2017) from Bulawayo town in the Matabeleland region concurred with the above saying,

Payment of *Amalobolo* in the NBC of Zimbabwe is greatly valued as part of our Ndebele marriage cultural practice. This is an appreciation to the parents for keeping the girl. For us church members this is biblical. For instance, when Rebecca was going to marry Isaac some gifts were given. In the NBC of Zimbabwe, we will be thanking the family of the bride-to-be.

In addition to this, a Ndebele Pastor C1(Interview 9, 10 January 2017) from Bulawayo city, in Matabeleland region confirmed the above view saying,

The Ndebele culture ensures that a number of Ndebele cultural rituals are conducted within the NBC of Zimbabwe. Some of these include *ukucola*, whereby a pregnant woman who visits the suitor's family is sprinkled with bile (*inyongo*) of a goat. In this ritual, the reminder of the bile is tied around *usanyongwana*. In this case; *usanyongwana* is a mature young sister of the pregnant girl, who would have accompanied her. The relatives of the suitor do it as way of appreciating the pregnancy. This is called *ukugqizisa* in Ndebele language.

From responses of A1, B1, C1 and F4 it is clear that they thought that both Shona and Ndebele cultures have the roles of encouraging upholding marriage cultural rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe. The role of Shona and Ndebele cultures was to encourage upholding marriage cultural rituals like payment of bride price and conduct of *ukucola* rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe. This supports Anthony (2012:236) who says that the other basic reason for inculturation in Africa

is the provision of a rich ground for integrating the culture of a particular people in the life of the church.

The above results were confirmed by my observations on 26 December 2016 during the payment of the bride price at church D. The bride price had to be paid first so that the son-in-law could be recognised in the family. On that day, the groom-to-be had to pay eight head of cattle. Furthermore, the groom-to-be had to buy a long coat (*ijazi*) and a jug (*iskali*) for the father, as well as a blanket (*ijali*) for the mother as part of the lobola. See **appendix 13** for the picture of the long coat, **appendix 14** is picture of a jug and **appendix 15** is a picture of the blanket that the groom-to-be had to buy for the in-laws. Therefore, from that I concluded that the Shona and Ndebele cultures had roles of encouraging upholding marriage cultural rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe churches.

From the foregoing section, I have established that the Shona and Ndebele cultures promote the upholding of certain marriage rituals like payment of the bride price and *ukucola* rituals. However, I would like to point out that some Shona and Ndebele cultural rituals used in the NBC of Zimbabwe were controversial. Although the two cultures encourage upholding marriage cultural rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe, my observation is that there is a controversy within the Shona and within the Ndebele on the time to pay lobola. I observed that there were some NBC of Zimbabwe members who said that although payment of lobola could be a way of appreciating the parents or guardians of the bride; the challenge is that in the modern days it is becoming commercialised. So it is becoming a bit expensive and oppressive in nature.

On this topic, Landman (2000:185) notes that black women theologians like Purity Malinga and others reject the payment of lobola, saying that it enhances violence against women. What Purity Malinga raised could be true, for men may think payment of lobola means that they have actually bought the woman. I discuss this debate in the next section.

4.2.2.1.1 Controversy on the time to pay lobola and conduct of the marriage rituals

Whilst I have shown that the Shona and Ndebele cultures encouraged upholding marriage cultural rituals, it is important to note that many interview and observation results do not agree on the proper time that they should be conducted. On the 13th of November 2016, two members from church D in Gwanda town, part of Matabeleland region, had a church wedding ceremony at the church auditorium. Pastor B1 was the marriage officer.

The marriage officer in the NBC of Zimbabwe has the role of pre-marital counselling and marriage counselling the bride and groom who will be wedding. The marriage officer officiates the wedding ceremony, uniting the two in a Holy matrimony. The government of Zimbabwe has the role to train the marriage officers. For any wedding ceremony in the Convention the President of the NBC of Zimbabwe appoints the marriage officer who would officiate. A pastor of a local congregation is not necessarily a marriage officer in his or her church wedding.

At the wedding ceremony at church D in Gwanda, very few relatives from the two families came to witness the wedding ceremony. **Appendix 16** shows the pictures of the couple who wedded on the 13th of November 2016. From the ethical perspective I would like to point out that the couple agreed that I should use their picture as part of my observation evidence since they strongly support the notion that one can marry and wed at any time of the year including November as long as the parents are agreeable.

It is worth noting that when the above couple wedded I observed that many debates arose among the NBC of Zimbabwe congregation members at church D in Gwanda town, which is in the Matabeleland region. For instance, on the 14th of November 2016 Elder D2 at church D (Interview 1, 14 November 2016) raised a question,

Why did the couple wed in the sacred month of November yet in Shona and Ndebele cultures it is a taboo to conduct wedding ceremonies in this month? This is not commendable at all. What they have done is not acceptable in both Shona and Ndebele cultures. The two should have done it in another month since November is a sanctified month when no weddings are to be conducted. November is a consecrated month when people begin preparing for the all-important agricultural season.

Elder D2 was strongly opposed to the idea of conducting marriage rituals in November since she strongly believed in the traditional cultures of the Shona and Ndebele people. She therefore believed that conducting rituals in November was not acceptable since it is a consecrated month when no marriage rituals can be held. Instead, people should start to prepare for the all-important agricultural season.

What Elder D2 asserted above concurs with what was raised in the *Sunday News* online of 27 November 2016 (accessed at <http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/the-curse-of-november-marriages/,1>) According to that article, “Cultural ceremonies such as *biras*, *kurova makuva* or even traditional marriage rites are regarded as a taboo during this month”. This reveals that according to Shona culture no religious rituals are to be held in November.

In line with the above view, I observed in November 2016 that some of the Shona and Ndebele respondents at church D believed that such an act provokes the ancestral spirits called *Midzimu* in the Shona language or *amadlozi* in the Ndebele language. Performing such sacred rituals leads to someone being put under disciplinary action by the sacred practitioners like the chiefs, since it is a taboo within the Shona and Ndebele culture.

However, Deacon D3 (Interview 2, 14 November 2016) from church D said,

It was proper for the two to be married in November since the parents of the bride and the groom had agreed. Each aspect of the Shona and Ndebele culture should not bind the NBC of Zimbabwe. After all, if any man is in Christ He is a new creation the old is gone. So, the two are not affected by Shona and Ndebele marriage cultural practices.

Deacon D3, therefore, was in favour of conducting marriage rituals in the month of November although it was regarded as a taboo in both Shona and Ndebele cultures. However, the fact that marrying and wedding in November is debatable is shown by the low turnout of the bride and groom's relatives at that couple's wedding ceremony. From the low attendance, I concluded that some relatives were not in favour of the wedding ceremony being held in November. So conducting marriage ceremonies in November remains a controversial matter. In other months of this is not controversial matter.

Most of the interview results I got from the other churches besides church D also revealed that payment of the bride price and conduct of marriage ceremonies in November was a controversial issue. Whilst some interviewees supported the idea, others were strongly against it.

One of the Ndebele Elders C2 (Interview 10, 15 January 2017) from Bulawayo town in Matabeleland region declared, "No one is allowed to marry in November for it is a sacred month. No marriage ceremonies are conducted in November for that gives a bad omen to the couple. The marriage will not last long".

Elder C2's view was supported by one of the Ndebele lay person C5 (Interview 11, 15 January 2017) interviewed on that same date, who said,

No one is allowed to conduct marriage ceremonies in November. Everything ends in October and starts in December. In Ndebele culture, people do not marry while crops are not ripe and when it is time for harvest. Usually in Ndebele culture, the wedding months are April, August and December when everything is green or the harvest is over.

A Shona National Executive Committee member NEM2 (Interview 12, 20 January 2017) from Bulawayo, in Matabeleland region concurred with the above assertions saying, "No marriages are held in the sacred of November since it is a taboo. Moreover, just like the Christian God who

created the world in six days and then rested on the seventh day the ancestral Shona ancestral spirits also rest in the month of November”.

From the foregoing responses, I concluded that the conduct of marriage rituals in the month of November was not acceptable among some of the Shona and Ndebele people in the NBC of Zimbabwe. This was taken as a taboo. Along with that, I established that, the Shona and Ndebele ancestral spirits rest during November as was done by the Christian God who rested on the seventh day after creating the world (Genesis 2:2).

On this aspect, the Shona Deacon E3 (Interview 15, 31 January 2017) in Bulawayo cited the controversial marriage of Morgan Tsvangirai²⁶, the leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which took place in November 2011. For that interviewee, the marriage lasted two weeks and by December 1, 2011, the marriage had ended. Therefore, from that I concluded that Deacon E3 did not support conducting marriage rituals in November. However, we should not forget that Morgan Tsvangirai was deeply involved in politics.

Shona Deacon E3’s view is in line with what was asserted by Mutenga (2016:3) who said that the marriage of Morgan Tsvangirai to Lorcadia Karimatsenga-Tembo in 2011 was considered taboo. According to this scholar Morgan Tsvangirai was made to pay for marrying in November by the chief.

Thus, some of the Shona and Ndebele interviewees thought that conducting marriages activities was not allowed in November. They strongly reiterated that the month of November is sacred; no marriage ceremonies and bride price payment could be done during that month. If ever that was done, the marriage may not last long and it was taboo.

What I got from the above interview responses concurs with what I got from *Sunday News* online of 27 November 2016 (accessed at <http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/the-curse-of-november-marriages/>, 1) where the writer notes, “Every society has its own traditions and superstitions, and in Zimbabwe getting married in the month of November is a taboo. The belief goes back many, many years, with a fear that a November wedding will bring bad luck”.

The belief that a couple should not conduct a wedding ceremony in November is also in line with what was said by a bride in Harare called Tendai, who told the BBC, “November weddings are a

²⁶ Morgan Tsvangirai is now the late yet the research interview was conducted when he was still alive.

big no... I would have had a November wedding but I think my parents would have a problem with a November wedding. My parents would have had a heart attack. My grandparents would not have attended”. The Sunday News recorded this online for 27 November 2016 (accessed at <http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/the-curse-of-november-marriages/>). This confirms that some of the Shona people do not encourage couples to conduct the marriages rituals in the sacred month of November.

However, besides church D interviewees I also discovered that in other NBC of Zimbabwe churches there was a certain group of the NBC of Zimbabwe Shona and Ndebele interview respondents who pointed out that the payment of lobola and conduct of marriage activities could be done any time of the year including November as long as the family has approved it.

For instance, Pastor C1 (Interview, 15 January 2017) in Matabeleland region, in Bulawayo town, asserted that it was commendable that one can marry even in the month of November. According to Pastor C1 (Interview, 15 January 2017), “In the NBC of Zimbabwe, we marry any time of the year including November because we do not live under the old covenant. Marriages can be conducted in November because we are not always bound by every Shona traditional cultural practice”.

This was supported by the National Executive member NEM3 from Bulawayo town (Interview 13, 23 January 2017), who said,

One can marry and wed any time of the year including November as long the bride, groom and families agree. As a Convention, we just abide by their desires. Marriages are conducted any time of the year including November since 2 Corinthians 5 verses 17 says, “Therefore, if any man is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has gone the new has come.

Thus, this group of respondents were saying they were not bound by that Shona and Ndebele cultural belief. Some even said they were now operating under new covenant brought by Jesus Christ. As such, they could pay bride price or marry at any time of the year. Therefore, from the above data, I concluded that this was a controversial issue.

4.2.2.1.2 Upholding controversial marriage rituals

Whilst the Shona and Ndebele cultures encourage the upholding of marriage rituals, some observation and interview results I got, show that certain rituals are a bit debatable. Firstly, Pastor B1 (Interview 4, 17 November 2017), at church B in Bulawayo, indicated that the Convention has incorporated the Shona cultural ritual in which the paternal aunt hands a clay pot full of water to the bride to bless her with a fertile marriage even though a person could be an NBC of Zimbabwe

church member. This is in line with Davis (2011) who describes this ritual saying it is used to cleanse or bless the couple at a wedding ceremony. For instance, the oldest woman present sprays *gin* on the couple whilst other relatives would consecrate the new union amongst the Yoruba people. *Gin* is said to be closely associated with ancestral spirits. Among the Bemba people the woman who is about to get married is given a clay pot by her father's sister. Davis points out that the clay pot stands for the womb that is to be filled and blessed with many pregnancies since the chief purpose of marriage is reproduction.

Some respondents, however, indicated that the NBC of Zimbabwe does not encourage such rituals, because God the Almighty is the one who blesses people with fertile marriages. For instance, according to Elder B2 (1 interview 5, 17 November 2017), "The Christian God is omnipotent, gracious, faithful and just. So He is the only one who can play such roles of blessing believers with fertile marriages".

In addition to this, most observation results I got from churches A, B, C and D in November 2016, December 2016 and January 2017 revealed that some Shona respondents had different views regarding the *kusungira* ritual. In my chapter two on Context analysis of the NBC of Zimbabwe under 2.2.4.2 on the *Kusungira* ritual, I pointed out that the Shona traditional culture marriage rituals do not end with the payment of bride price or *roora*. Every marriage is expected to be fruitful through children. Numerous Shona people in a number of places (Gombe 2000:123) conduct the *kusungira* ritual. This is done for a bride who has been married through *kukumbira*, *kutizisa*, or *kutizira*.

In order to verify the upholding of the controversial *kusungira* ritual I made some investigations in churches A, B, C and D. According to Pastor A1 (Interview 7, 8 December 2016) from Gweru, in the Midlands region,

Kusungira ritual is a practice whereby a newly married woman who has fallen pregnant for the first time, is taken to her parents to live with them from say seven to eight months until the time she gives birth. This would give the mother of the pregnant woman time to monitor her daughter during the last months of her pregnancy. She is given guidance and counselling on how to handle a newly born baby. This is done because it would be the first time for that bride to give birth so it is a way of trying to help her on how to handle the new baby.

Another Pastor CI (Interview 9, 15 January 2017) confirmed this, saying, "On this I can say this is quite a noble idea because the pregnant person would give birth at a place where she would be free and comfortable."

This was confirmed by the interview results I got from one of the Shona National Executive Members, NEM2 (Interview 12, 20 January 2017). According to NEM2, “One of the NBC of Zimbabwe lay members at church B conducted *kusungira* ritual for his wife in July 2016. The wife was taken to Chegutu area; in Mashonaland West to fulfil the ritual. The parents of the wife had requested that the ritual be held for their daughter since that was her first pregnancy”. For this Shona National Executive Member NEM2, the *kusungira* ritual is one of the rituals that can be conducted in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

However, according to Deacon E3 (Interview 15, 31 January 2017

In our E church the pastor, elders, deacons and church committee members are strongly against such a stance. That will be setting a wrong precedence in E church. If someone does that, she can be put under disciplinary action. During the first pregnancy, the bride should give birth where she is married, since she could still be guided and counselled by other mature women from that side as well.

From this, I concluded that the conduct of the *kusungira* ritual was controversial in the NBC of Zimbabwe in Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

From observation results at church C and F in the Matabeleland region in January 2017 I established that the pregnant woman was given some herbs called *masuo*. Such herbs would open the birth canal to be used during delivery. I established that the bride’s mother- in- law could not play such a role.

The observation results at churches C and F revealed that before this ritual was conducted the bride and the groom were prohibited to meet the parents of the bride. They could only meet at funerals. These observation results reinforced the fact that in Shona traditional culture, there is a strong belief that if the bride and the groom happen to meet the parents of the bride it will be dangerous to them (*vanotyorwa misana*). The Shona people believe that the parents may become sick.

I noted that a day is set when the *kusungira* ritual is to be conducted. On the set date the family of the husband would take two goats, one piece of material which is big enough to make the mother-in-law’s dress, the fee for someone who will make the dress and mealie meal for thick porridge (*sadza*). It was stressed that it was necessary that there should be a bit of rapoko (*rukweza*) or millet (*mhunga*) meal that could be used to cook the thick porridge (*sadza*) for four people. The two goats would be a male and female one. The male one is for the father-in-law, whilst the female one would be for the mother-in-law.

From the observations at church C and F I also noted that the *kusungira* ritual was not just a ceremony, it was a ritual. Its main objective was directed at the mother-in-law, who was supposed to confirm to her ancestral spirits that she was quite happy and then appeals to them to guide her daughter in giving birth safely. The pregnant daughter remained behind so that if there were any problems the mother would give assistance and even appeal to the ancestral spirits to intervene where necessary. During that time, she was given herbs (*masuo*). Moreover, I observed that during the conduct of the *kusungira* ritual there was an application of traditional medicines on the newly born baby to strengthen him or her. In this case, some of the herbs are applied to the head of new baby (*kurapa nhova*). Furthermore, some herbs are tied around the neck and waist to strengthen the baby. This is similar to tying a charm around the waist and neck of the baby (*intebe*) as done by the Ndebele.

Above all, the observation results from church C in January 2017 revealed that some members of the NBC of Zimbabwe were of the view that it was proper to conduct such a ritual, since the pregnant person would get guidance and counselling on how to handle the new baby from elderly women from her place of birth. Along with this, when the mother-in-law and daughter were coming into the house, the piece of material was spread at the door and the mother-in-law and her daughter walked past each other whilst stepping over the material. The daughter got into the house whilst the mother goes out and then vice versa. The family of the husband slaughters the male goat. It was then cooked for everyone. Part of the meat was cooked with some herbs. It was then served with rapoko or millet *sadza* and given to the father-in-law, mother-in-law and the couple. The four would then eat from the same plate and even take turns to feed each other. The female goat and the kids it bears would remain the property of the mother-in-law.

This kind of ritual was also conducted by the Ndebele believers in the NBC of Zimbabwe at church F in Bulawayo, part of the Matabeleland region. From most of the observations made in January 2017, I noted that the pregnant person was taken to her home area so that she gets some guidance and counselling on how to handle the newly born baby. From the results, I got the information that the woman was to be taken there with a goat (*imbuzi yesitshebo*), which was slaughtered for relish. After giving birth, there was a process of heat therapy (*ukuthoba*) on the stomach, backbone, thighs and any other part of the body affected through the childbirth. That was done to relieve the stretched muscles. A cloth was tied around the stomach of that woman. That was done in the evening when she retired. The kind of inculturation that was done therefore had to make sure such processes were carried out to help the woman who is giving birth for the first time.

From a sociological perspective, I established that although women contributed to the production of human life and play an essential role in the continuity of human life, they were regarded as a source of danger. Blood of menstruation and birth was believed to be a source of danger. Such a view was shown by the Ndebele culture as well because someone who was pregnant for the first time was asked to give birth at her home to avoid contaminating the husband. This is supported by Mapuranga, Chimininge, Matumbu and Makamure (2011: 66) who point out that this notion is also prevalent among the Yao and Azande religions in Africa. In the Shona and Ndebele cultures too, women are seen as threatening to life through their polluting powers (menstruation).

Certain marriage rituals, therefore, were a bit controversial within the NBC of Zimbabwe. Some of those interviewed thought that such rituals should be conducted, whilst others said they must not be conducted at all in the NBC of Zimbabwe. The next segment examines another way in which Shona and Ndebele culture influences the NBC of Zimbabwe. This is the role of being a basis for strong marriages.

4.2.2.2 Basis for strong marriages

Table 4.9 shows that 32 (30.2%) of the Shona and Ndebele respondents supported the notion that the traditional culture supported strong marriages. Table 4.9 shows that 20 (18.8%) of the respondents thought that the Shona culture is a basis for good marriages. It builds strong marriages by bringing the two families together before the church marriage ceremony.

Together with this, loyalty and trustworthiness is encouraged between the couples. This was supported by interview results I got from Pastor C1 on the 15th of January 2017 at church C, who said that Shona culture legitimises marriage as the partners seek permission and approval from their parents and family to marry. According to Pastor C1 (Interview 9, 15 January 2017), “In our church, we encourage that the man and woman who want to be married in this church should first seek permission and approval from the parents or guardians as a basis for good marriage. The parents or guardians are the ones who give us the green light to marry the two”. From this, I concluded that Shona culture is a basis for good marriages in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

In addition to this, table 4.9 above also shows that 12 (11.4%) of the Ndebele respondents thought that the Ndebele culture was a basis for good marriages. The Ndebele culture gave a basis for marriage foundations by providing proper communication channels between the two parties. Through the culture, there was also the authentication of the marriage because the parents needed to be involved in the giving or acceptance of the bride. From the above information I concluded

that 32 (30.2%) of the respondents thought that both Shona and Ndebele cultures were a basis for good marriages in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

This was supported by most of my observation of the conduct of a wedding ceremony at church D in November 2016, in the Midlands region. It was revealed to me that the Ndebele culture was a basis for good marriages. For instance, I observed that when the church wedding ceremony was held, the bride and the groom were asked if they were serious about getting married. They even gave marriage vows. The marriage officer asked the bride and the groom questions on whether they were serious about getting into a holy matrimony. The marriage officer asked such a question to the couple in fulfilment of the government requirement whether they were Ndebele or not. The two answered accordingly.

As a basis of good marriages, table 4.9 above also shows that the Shona respondents asserted that the Shona culture played the role of encouraging respect for in-laws in accordance with the marriage rituals. This was confirmed by the observations I made during the conduct of a church wedding ceremony in Midlands at church A. The observation results I got at church A, in December 2016, in the Midlands region, showed that for a bride and groom to wed in the NBC of Zimbabwe there was to be consent of the in-laws. The wedding ceremony in the church was conducted after payment of the bride price to the groom's in-laws had been made. The bride and the groom were introduced to the church members after such demands had been met. During the NBC of Zimbabwe wedding ceremony, the father of the bride handed over the bride to the groom. From that, I concluded that the in-laws were greatly respected in the conduct of marriage ceremonies. Thus, the Shona culture enabled people to know that in-laws must be given enough respect in the marriage rituals. Thus, the Shona culture influenced the church to do this during the marriage ceremony

In addition to this, table 4.9 shows that the Ndebele respondents thought that Ndebele culture, just like the Shona culture, encouraged respect for the in-laws. In this case, parental consent helped to give the church a good reputation. For instance, observation results I got at church C in January 2017 in Matabeleland region showed that whenever the bride and groom wedded in the church the parents played paramount roles. Just as in the Shona culture, the bride and groom were introduced to the church after they had met the demands of the bride's parents or someone playing that role. For example, during the conduct of the church wedding ceremony the marriage officer asked, "Who is handing over this bride to the bridegroom?" The parent of the bride or someone playing

his role quickly said, “I George Charungwandicho, the father to Rosemary Charungwandicho is offering my daughter to Joshua Shumba to be her wife”. After he had done that, the wedding procedures continued. From the observation results, I found that the Ndebele culture like the Shona culture helped in bringing the two different families together. This shows that the cultures made the channels for dealing with marriage rituals clear. From the above information, I concluded that the respondents were of the opinion that the Shona and Ndebele cultures encouraged respect for the in-laws in the NBC of Zimbabwe’s marriage rituals.

What happened at church C in the Matabeleland region during the wedding ceremony is similar to what happens in the Jewish tradition. For instance, Fairchild (2016:4) asserts that in Jewish tradition it was the father’s responsibility to present his daughter in marriage to the groom. She noted that the parents of the bride had the duty for endorsing their daughter’s choice of a husband:

By escorting her down the aisle, a father says, “I have done my very best to present you, my daughter as a pure bride. I approve of this man as your choice for a husband, and now I bring you to him”. When a minister asks, “Who gives this woman?” the father responds, “Her mother and I” (Fairchild 2016:4).

In the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions, as in the Jewish tradition, the giving away of the bride demonstrates the parents’ blessing on the union as well as the transfer of care and dependability to the husband.

4.2.2.3 Guidance and counseling

Twenty-eight (26.4%) of the Shona and Ndebele respondents said that guidance and counselling was one of the significant roles played by culture. Table 4.9 shows that 15 (14.2%) of Shona respondents agreed that guidance and counselling is one of the roles played by the Shona culture in the NBC of Zimbabwe’s marriage rituals.

In addition to this, table 4.9 above shows that 13 (12.3%) of the Ndebele respondents also thought that the Ndebele culture played the role of guidance and counselling in the marriage rituals. In this case, boys and girls received guidance and counselling before getting married. The two cultures strongly encouraged youngsters to follow what the bride and the groom had done. They even cultivated good morals in young people. For instance, the Ndebele culture helped in grooming the new couple, on how to live together as husband and wife. This was enhanced at church by the deacons, elders and pastors of the church. From this I established that 28 (26.4%) of the respondents thought that the Shona and Ndebele cultures played significant roles of guidance and counselling in the marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Most of the observation results confirmed what has been highlighted in the foregoing paragraphs. For instance, the observation results I got in January 2017 at church C in Matabeleland region showed that, before the conduct of a wedding ceremony a bridal shower party was conducted for a bride-to-be, whilst a bachelor's party was held for a groom-to-be in the NBC of Zimbabwe. In this case, the bride and groom were guided and counselled by the aunts and uncles before proceeding with their marriage preparations. Good morals were also cultivated among the youths through preaching and teaching as well. In addition to that, the Shona culture played a part in conflict resolution. When there was a dispute in marriage, the partners approach the aunties and uncles for guidance and counselling.

The Shona interviewees at church B confirmed the above data in November 2016. From the interview results, I established that guidance and counselling done by the aunts and uncles complemented that of pastors, elders, deacons and the marriage officers within the NBC of Zimbabwe. This was also supported by one of the Shona elders, C2 (Interview 10, 15 January 2017) at church C who said, "When a couple has failed to solve a marital problem, they would seek advice from their aunts and uncles. The NBC of Zimbabwe pastors and elders strongly encourage couples to come for guidance and counselling when they have marital problems".

Thus, I can say pastors, elders, and deacons play guidance and counselling roles of aunts and uncles to the married. Above all, the church facilitates dialogue between families, and the church would intervene where there is a misunderstanding.

The views of the Shona and Ndebele respondents on guidance and counselling are supported by Gombe (2000:61), who points out that during the courtship process the aunts had a paramount role to play in guidance and counselling in traditional Shona society. The aunts guided and counselled both the boy and the girl. The girl was strongly encouraged to maintain good moral behaviour, especially in keeping her virginity. Gombe (2000:61) also noted that in Shona courtship rituals elderly women (*chembere*) also had a significant role. For example, when the mature girl was taken for marriage they would strongly teach her how to be a good homemaker. Even the uncles played an important role of teaching the mature boy how to be a good husband. Thus, Shona culture also played a significant role in guidance and counselling in the NBC of Zimbabwe like what was pointed out by Gombe (2000).

Nyathi (2001:97) also points out that there is guidance and counselling of girls in Ndebele culture. The girl would receive schooling on various issues including how to become a good wife, how to

care for children, tolerable behaviour towards men, sex education and the regulation of one's sexual needs (Nyathi (2001:97). Bozongwana (2000:21) says, "Lessons begin immediately on how to be a good house wife. Care of children, behaviour towards men, use of sex and cookery are some of the things taught to the girl by the oldest woman of the home..."

Nyathi (2001:107) and Bozongwana (2000:20) also note that there are formal teachings given to the boy in Ndebele culture during initiation rituals. Explanations are given to the boy about what has happened (Nyathi 2001:107). The boy is informed that he is grown up but he is not yet someone's husband. He is strongly encouraged to have control ability on his sexual desires as well (Nyathi 2001:107). For Bozongwana (2000:20) the boy receives teachings on how to settle disputes especially in a polygamous situation.

What I noted in the NBC of Zimbabwe is also supported by Mbiti (1997:131) who notes that preparations for marriage is a long process which has vital moments which may be marked with rituals. Some of the rituals are the initiation rites or puberty rituals. Mbiti (1997:132) goes on to assert that one of the educational purposes of initiation rites is to familiarise young people with matters of sex, marriage, reproduction and family life. He noted that the initiation is a ritual consecration and training for marriage. It is after that process of initiation that the young people can engage in marital affairs. This shows that guidance and counselling is important in relation to marriage issues of the NBC of Zimbabwe. On this Mbiti (1997:132) also says, "Since the whole community participates in the initiation rites, it is therefore the entire corporate body of society which prepares young people for marriage and family life. It is my conclusion that initiation rituals are of paramount significance in the African culture".

In societies where there are no initiation rites, it is the duty and responsibility of parents and relatives to teach regularly their children on marital affairs. In this case, girls are taught about food preparations, behaviour towards men, caring for children, looking after the husband and other domestic affairs. On the other side, boys are educated on what most concerns men, like looking after cattle, behaviour towards one's in-law and how to acquire bride price (Mbiti 1997:132). Thus, I conclude that parents and relatives play a significant role in guiding and counselling youngsters in marital affairs.

Under section 2.7 on Tonga marriage rituals I have also noted that according to www.everyculture.com (accessed 17-06- 2016), the Zambian people of the Tonga tribe had initiation ceremonies. A girl was trained for her future as a man's wife. Usually there was a time

of living away from the village and a short ceremony marked the girl's maturity. She was given a new name to indicate her adult status. That is the idea also emphasised in the NBC of Zimbabwe by elders and pastors in marriage rituals. The church members may not follow exactly what the Tonga people do in removing the girls from the village and giving them new names.

Under section 2.6 on Shangaan marriage rituals Engelbrecht (2007) also notes the Shangaan people have their own rituals for weddings. Shangaan girls are initiated to marriageable young women in a rite that includes scarring of the face and arms. Thus, it is my conclusion that in line with what was asserted by Engelbrecht (2007) deacons, elders and pastors of the NBC of Zimbabwe play a significant role in guiding and counselling youngsters in marital affairs.

4.2.2.4 Promoting unity between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the unbelievers

Lastly, table 4.9 above shows that a total of 8 (7.6%) of the respondents thought that the Ndebele and Shona cultures had roles of promoting unity between the NBC of Zimbabwe and unbelievers in marriage rituals. In this case, 4 (3.8%) of the Shona respondents are of the opinion that the Shona culture played a role of promoting unity between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the unbelievers.

Four (3.8%) of the Ndebele respondents also held the view that the Ndebele culture had a role of promoting unity between community and the members of the NBC of Zimbabwe. On this, I can say the Ndebele culture promoted good relations between NBC of Zimbabwe, and those who are not members. Therefore, I can say a total of 8 (7.6%) of the respondents thought that the Ndebele and Shona cultures had roles of promoting unity between the NBC of Zimbabwe and unbelievers through marriage rituals.

Most of the interview results supported this. For instance, Church committee member F4 (Interview 14, 23 January 2017) said, "The Shona culture stands as a witness between God, the church and the new couple in line with the marriage rituals". This response was supported by Deacon E3 (Interview 15, 31 January 2017) who said, "The Shona and Ndebele cultures are used to bringing more followers into the church".

In the preceding paragraphs, I have established that the Shona and Ndebele cultures played a paramount role in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. They encouraged payment of the bride price, provided guidance and counselling, promoted unity and even helped in upholding cultural

rituals. Having shown that, in the next section I examine some of the aspects of culture that have been incorporated into the marriage ceremonies of the NBC of Zimbabwe.

4.2.3 Aspects of culture adopted

Following Kritzinger's dimension of reflexivity (Banda 2010:128), in this segment, I consider the following questions: Is there any reflection from leaders and members on the impact of the inculturation of marriage practices? What are some of the aspects of Shona and Ndebele cultures that have been fused in the NBC of Zimbabwe? In the next segment, I examine some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects that have been incorporated. In the inculturation of the marriage rituals, the NBC of Zimbabwe Christian doctrines were combined with the African traditional cultural values and contemporary way of the Ndebele and Shona people. The African cultures of the Ndebele and Shona people were merged with the Christian biblical teachings without sacrificing the basic ethics of either. The main goal was to make Christianity a religion that is acceptable to all the Ndebele and Shona African Christians in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. In this case, inculturation mixed Christian dogmas with African traditional cultural standards and current way of life (Magesa 2004:10). The aspects of local culture adopted in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies are presented in table 4.10.

Table 4:10 Distribution of respondents according to cultural aspects adopted in the marriage ceremonies (N=106)

Cultural aspects adopted	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand Total N=106	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Bride price payment	28	26.4	27	25.5	55	51.9
Marrying someone whose background is known	9	8.5	7	6.6	16	15.1
Guidance and Counselling	15	14.2	14	13.2	29	27.4
Ululating, dancing and giving of gifts	3	2.8	3	2.8	6	5.6
Total	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

4.2.3.1 Bride price payment

Table 4.10 above shows that a total of 55 (51.9%) of the respondents indicated that bride price payment is one of the cultural aspects that has been adopted in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies. In this case 28 (26.4%) of the Shona and 27 (25.5%) of the Ndebele respondents were of the opinion that bride price payment has been adopted in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. Therefore, I can say 55 (51.9%) of the total respondents were of the view that payment of lobola is one of the cultural aspects that has been adopted by the NBC of Zimbabwe. Thus, more than half of the total respondents was of the view that bride price payment had been inculturated in the NBC of Zimbabwe in Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

This was supported by the interview results that I got. For instance, Elder C2 (Interview 10, 15 January 2017) said, “In the NBC of Zimbabwe for the bride and groom to wed in the NBC of Zimbabwe, a part or full payment of the bride price should have been made in an inculturated marriage ritual. The NBC of Zimbabwe strongly preaches against the charging of exorbitant lobola. Therefore, I concluded that part or full payment of the lobola was paid before a wedding ceremony was conducted in church. That bride price must not be overcharged.

On the payment of the bride price, I observed at church C that the NBC of Zimbabwe regulation on marriage sacrament strongly reiterated the opinion that charging bride price is quite commendable but it is improper for the parents of the bride to charge exorbitant lobola and delay the wedding. I have also noted that in NBC of Zimbabwe in these modern days the charging of exorbitant bride price by the bride’s parents is linked partly to the general rise in the educational standards of the girls. It has come to my knowledge that the higher the level of education attained by a girl, the higher the lobola value becomes, and the stronger the demand by a greater number of parents to have at least some form of compensation in return for the relatively high cost of education.

Mangena and Ndlovu (2013:476) support what I established above when they say,

Some in-laws are reportedly asking for such items as cell phones and even cars as part of bride price payment. Some Shona communities now have a separate charge for girl who gets married soon after graduation. This particular girl attracts a high charge because she possesses a fresh educational certificate (*chitupa chinyoro*).

Because of this current scenario, the NBC of Zimbabwe urges the parents and relatives of the bride not to overcharge the bride price and delay the wedding in the inculturated marriage rituals.

Overcharging the bride price beyond the original meaning and the symbolic dimension makes it appear to be “a buying” of the wife, thus losing part of her dignity and freedom.

Moreover, from the observations, I made at churches B, C, D and E the value of the bride price lies in the link that it creates between the two families of the bride and groom. In the NBC of Zimbabwe, church elders and deacons were actively involved in the marriage proceedings. The elders and deacons actually accompanied the bride-to-be and groom-to-be when marriage negotiations were conducted between the in-laws. In the NBC of Zimbabwe, the elders and deacons played a significant role in negotiations of the bride price when the bride-to-be and groom-to-be are getting married. The pastors and elders even blessed the couple during NBC of Zimbabwe wedding ceremonies for they were concerned with the spiritual matters of the church. During the conduct of church wedding, the deacons play a significant role since they are concerned with the physical and material aspects of the church activities. The deacons and elders ensured that the church wedding ceremonies flowed smoothly, working together with the family members. It is unfortunate that the modern cash economy has greatly corrupted the practice in the NBC of Zimbabwe. As Michael Ndubiwa rightly stresses, lobola is being commercialised with some people charging exorbitant amounts in the marriage rituals (Manyoba 1991:68). Just after the attainment of independence in 1980, the commercialisation of lobola became an issue of great debate in many public forums including parliament. I have established that the charging of exorbitant bride price is still an issue in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Linked with the payment of lobola is the fact that the NBC of Zimbabwe has adopted the Shona and Ndebele concept of introducing the bride and groom to the in-laws. I have observed at churches B, C, D and E that in both the Shona and Ndebele cultures this practice was followed. For instance, if a young woman or young man from the NBC of Zimbabwe was introduced to the families or the other church, elders and deacons of the NBC of Zimbabwe accompanied him or her and they become part of the crew. No one was to go alone. I observed that at church C in January 2017 Elder C2 had to accompany lay member C5's son when he was being introduced. This enabled the family members or church members to know that the NBC of Zimbabwe was strongly involved in the marriage activities of the two. In this case, Pastor C1 was also aware of what was happening. This gave the marriage of the two much respect as well. Through that, the NBC of Zimbabwe facilitated the groom and the bride-to-be being introduced to the family members or church. In the Ndebele culture, this is called *ukuvela, or ukuvelelwa*, while in the Shona culture this is called *kuuya kuzoonekwa kwemukomana kana musikana asati aroora kana kuroorwa kuhamu*

dzemukomana kana musikana. On many occasions, the church elders and deacons had been involved in such activities of accompanying the groom-to-be or bride -to-be to the in-laws. After that, the pastor introduced them to the church congregation.

4.2.3.2 Marrying someone whose cultural background is known

Table 4.10 shows that 16 (15.1%) of the total Shona and Ndebele respondents held the view that one should marry someone whose cultural background is known. This means some of the Shona and the Ndebele population sample held the idea that the NBC of Zimbabwe adopted the Shona and Ndebele cultural view that one should marry a person whose cultural background was known. In Shona culture there is a proverb “*Rooreranai vematongo*”, whilst in Ndebele culture they say, “*Ukhuni olungaziwayo kaluthezwa*” to express this view. The above highlighted Shona and Ndebele proverbs mean that one should marry or should be married to a person he or she knows his cultural background. In the NBC of Zimbabwe, the congregants were strongly encouraged to marry from within the NBC of Zimbabwe. Despite such encouragement, I observed that in January 2017 at church C one of the Shona young women was married to someone who did not belong to NBC of Zimbabwe. A bridal shower party was conducted for this young woman in January 2017 and church women played an active role.

A number of interviews I conducted confirmed this. The pastor, elder, and lay member at church C in January 2017 confirmed that the NBC of Zimbabwe encouraged the believers to marry from within the NBC of Zimbabwe to avoid clash of doctrines. According to Pastor C1 (Interview 9, 15 January 2017), “In our church we strongly encourage our church members to marry within NBC of Zimbabwe to avoid clash of doctrines. More so, one should also marry a Christian who is considered to be morally upright”.

Elder C2 (Interview 10, 15 January 2017) of the above mentioned church supported Pastor C1’s idea saying, “As the NBC of Zimbabwe, we do not promote the idea of marrying outside our own church because that may cause unnecessary conflict between the couple since, they will be coming from different doctrinal backgrounds. Furthermore, one should be a well-mannered person who knows Christ”.

These responses show that the NBC of Zimbabwe strongly encouraged the notion of marrying morally upright believers from within the Convention. In Shona culture, they refer to this person as *munhu ane tsika dzakanaka*, whilst in Ndebele culture he or she is regarded as *umuntu olebuntu*. The above highlighted statements mean that the person who is to be married should be a well

behaved person. On this, I can say the NBC of Zimbabwe inculturated the Shona and Ndebele traditional cultural aspect of encouraging candidates to marry well-behaved Christians whose cultural background was known. This was done to promote a strong Christian foundation within the NBC of Zimbabwe.

From most of the observations I made in November 2016 at churches B and D I observed that the NBC of Zimbabwe accepts the regular proposal of marriage called (*kumema*) to call or (*kukumbira*) to ask. In the NBC of Zimbabwe, a member is encouraged to inform any of the NBC of Zimbabwe deacons, elders or pastors of the intention to marry, soon after the agreement between the two families. According to one of the National Executive committee members NEM1 I interviewed on the 14th of November 2016,

The bride's father (*vatezvara*) normally has a tendency to delay his permission for a marriage ceremony in the church until the first selection of marriage cattle (*mombe dzedanga*) has taken place. It is only after that can the marriage be announced in the NBC of Zimbabwe. After that the ultimate church wedding ceremony and civil registration occur. No cohabitation or living-ins is encouraged in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Therefore, I can say the NBC of Zimbabwe regulations has inculturated the regular proposal marriage into the church marriage rituals.

Table 5.10 shows that the Shona and Ndebele respondents believed that the NBC of Zimbabwe had adopted the cultural belief that there should be the consent of the parents to any wedding ceremony conducted. In Shona and Ndebele traditional cultures, the bride weds with the consent of the parent(s) or guardian(s). A number of respondents supported the notion. Therefore, the NBC of Zimbabwe has inculturated the aspect of getting the approval of the parents before the conduct of a church wedding ceremony. A number of wedding ceremonies that I have witnessed in the NBC of Zimbabwe confirmed this.

Prom (2013:112) notes a similar practice in the Gambian Methodist church in West Africa. In that Methodist church the marriage rite of passage has been left mostly in the hands of the family and relatives. The church just waits to receive the particular couple and then they are married in church (Prom 2013:112). In these circumstances Prom (2013:112) strongly argues for the church to develop an official liturgical cognisance of the customary necessities of the marriage rite of passage in which the Methodist church, rather than just an invited guest be an essential part of the ceremony.

4.2.3.3 Guidance and counselling

Table 4.10 above shows that 29 (27.4%) of the total respondents were of the opinion that the NBC of Zimbabwe has adopted the notion of guidance and counselling. In this case, table 4.10 above shows that 15 (14.2%) of the Shona respondents and 14 (13.2%) of the Ndebele respondents agreed that the NBC of Zimbabwe adopted the concept of guidance and counselling which are also aspects of the Shona and Ndebele cultures. I have noted that some of these concepts are shown during the bridal shower parties and bachelors' parties, when the brides-to-be and grooms-to-be are guided and counselled in preparation for married life. Furthermore, the elders, deacons and the pastors advise, guide and counsel the youths who would be in a love relationship.

A number of observation results I got support the above idea. For instance, in January 2017 a bridal shower party was conducted for one of the Shona young women at church C in Matabeleland region. The NBC of Zimbabwe women guided and counselled the bride at church C, in preparation for the marriage relationship she was getting into.

On the topic of guidance and counselling, I noted that pre-marital sex is discouraged among the youths of the NBC of Zimbabwe as in Christian culture. For instance, according to deacon E3 (Interview 15, 31 January 2017) at church E in Matabeleland region, any youth who indulges in pre-marital sex is put under a disciplinary action. According to the above deacon,

The youth who has committed pre-marital sex appears before a disciplinary committee made up of the church leaders composed of the pastor, elders, deacons and youth advisors who advise, guide and counsel that person. This is done, as a deterrent measure. The aim is to correct and teach others in the church. The pastor would then publicly announce it to the rest of congregation members so that others would learn a lesson. If the person was a leader in praise and worship or ushering he or she is advised to stop performing the duties for a stipulated time.

In the Shona language this is termed, "*Kuiswa pasi peshamhu yekereke*", whilst in the Ndebele language this is called, "*Ukufakwa phansi kwoswazi lwebandla*". The above statements mean that the member are to be put under disciplinary action by the churches authorities. If he or she was a leader in the church, he or she is advised to stop performing his or her stipulated duties for a stipulated time. This shows that the NBC of Zimbabwe like the Christian culture strongly preaches against pre-marital sex.

In January 2017, I observed that one of the young praise and worship team leaders was ordered by the church leadership to stop performing her duties after she was found pregnant before being lawfully married. From that I concluded that the preachers always encourage the youths not to indulge in sexual activities before marriage. Normally in the NBC of Zimbabwe the preachers always preach quoting Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:8-9, "Now to the unmarried and the widows I say

it is good for them to stay unmarried as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion”. Thus, I can say the NBC of Zimbabwe discourages pre-marital sex as part of guidance and counselling as is done in Christian culture generally.

What I noted in the NBC of Zimbabwe on guidance, counselling, and the payment of bride price is also found among the Tonga tribe in Zimbabwe. I have noted that the Tonga tribe, like other Zambian people has initiation ceremonies (www.everyculture.com accessed 17-06-2016). A girl is trained for her future as a man’s wife. Usually there is a time of living away from the village and a short ceremony marks the girl’s maturity. She is given a new name to indicate her adult status. A groom-to-be has to pay bride price to the family of the bride, usually in the form of cattle. After marriage, a couple lived in the husband’s village. Thus, the Tonga people have marriage rituals, which they observe in their culture. The NBC of Zimbabwe’s ritual practices are in line with Catholic practice on chastity before marriage in Christian preaching as part of inculturation in the Catholic Church (Magesa 2004:10). What is happening in the NBC of Zimbabwe is in line with the Tonga tribe’s practice and the Catholic Church.

4.2.3.4 Ululating, dancing, and giving of gifts

Table 4.10 above also shows that a total of 6 (5.6%) of the respondents thought that ululation, dancing and giving of gifts have been adopted as part of the NBC of Zimbabwe’s wedding ceremonies. In this case, 3 (2.8%) of the Shona respondents and 3 (2.8. %) of the Ndebele respondents thought the NBC of Zimbabwe had adopted the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices of ululating, dancing and giving of gifts during the conduct of wedding ceremonies.

Numerous observations I made at A, B, C, D, and E churches in 2015 and 2016 during the conduct of the wedding ceremonies confirmed this. For instance, at church D in Gwanda area in the Matabeleland region on the 13th of November 2016, I observed that during the church wedding ceremony there was a lot of ululation and dancing. Furthermore, many gifts were given to bless the couple who wedded. Thus, the NBC of Zimbabwe has inculturated these Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the conduct of church wedding ceremonies.

Many interview results confirmed this. For instance, the interview results I got at A, B, C, D and E churches in Midlands and Matabeleland regions revealed that in the Shona traditional culture, when a bride is sent off for marriage, she is given gifts. According to Pastor AI (Interview 7, 8 December 2016), “When a bride is sent off for marriage she is given gifts like mortar (*duri*),

sleeping mat (*rupasa*), sweeping broom (*mutsvairo*) and some kitchen utensils such as plates (*ndiro*), pots (*mapoto*) and many other items which she is supposed to use in her new home”.

This was supported by elder C2 (Interview 10, 15 January 2017) who said

The same applies to the bride from the Ndebele culture in our NBC of Zimbabwe. She is given a sleeping mat (*ixansi*), harvesting basket (*ingcebethu*), and sweeping broom (*umthanyelo*). This is the concept, which has been borrowed by the Convention members when they conduct bridal showers for the bride and wedding ceremonies.

Therefore, I can say a lot of ululation, dancing and offering of gifts is done as part of the celebrations during wedding ceremonies in the NBC of Zimbabwe churches. This shows that the concept of ululating, dancing and offering of gifts from Shona and Ndebele cultures in the conduct of marriage ceremonies is part of inculturation of marriage rituals.

What is happening within the NBC of Zimbabwe is in line with what is happening in the Roman Catholic Church in Kenya (Magesa 2004:10). Singing, dancing, clapping of hands and beating of drums in the liturgy, is evidence of a new awareness and acceptance of African customs in the Convention. It is important to note that such aspects are rooted in the African heritage.

In the preceding paragraphs, I have described several cultural practices adopted by the NBC of Zimbabwe in the running of marriage ceremonies. Some of these include payment of lobola, marrying someone whose background is known, parents’ consent and many other aspects. I concluded that a number of aspects have been inculturated into the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

4.2.4 Motivation for adopting cultural practices

In line with the dimension of discernment for action (Banda 2010:128), I consider the following questions: What actions are taken to inculturate marriage practices? What causes the blending of these practices in this Convention? In order to assess the motivation for incorporating the aspects of Shona and Ndebele in the NBC of Zimbabwe, I examined the reasons for their incorporation. The results are presented in table 4.11.

Table 4:11 Distribution of respondents according to the motivation for adopting Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in NBC of Zimbabwe (N=106)

Motivation for adopting cultural practices	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand Total N=106	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Keeping cultures	17	16.0	15	14.2	32	30.2
Win people to Christ	7	6.6	12	11.3	19	17.9
Prevent disputes	10	9.4	9	8.5	19	17.9
Biblically commendable	16	15.1	11	10.4	27	25.5
Believers to feel at home	5	4.7	4	3.8	9	8.5
Total	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

4.2.4.1 Keeping cultures

Table 4.11 shows that a total of 32 (30.2%) of the of Shona and Ndebele respondents thought that the NBC of Zimbabwe adopted some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects to preserve the cultures of the two groups. In this case, 17 (16.0%) of the Shona and 15 (14.2%) of the Ndebele were of the opinion that the NBC of Zimbabwe adopted some of the cultural practices as a way of keeping cultures. This was done because the NBC of Zimbabwe operates within a certain culture of people. The Shona and Ndebele practices are part of the culture within which the NBC of Zimbabwe operates. Because of this, the African culture is considered in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies as a way of keeping culture so that the believers would feel that their culture is not ignored. From that, I concluded that the NBC of Zimbabwe does not destroy Shona and Ndebele culture in the way it performs marriage rituals. Thus, aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture were inculturated by the NBC of Zimbabwe to keep the cultures of the believers.

This is in line with what Magesa (2004:10) noted in the Catholic Church in Kenya, where the Catholic officials cited cultural awareness and pride on the one hand, and Christianity's potential contribution to the growth of African culture on the other, as one of the reasons for inculturation. For the African Christians in Kenya to identify extremely with the Christian church, and treat it as their own, rather than as a foreign organisation, it ought to be deep-seated in the local cultures,

taking into it the people's customs and ways of doing things (Magesa 2004:10). This means the NBC of Zimbabwe has to keep the Shona and Ndebele culture as well as is happening in Kenya.

From my observations at church C on the 15th of January 2017 in Matabeleland, I established that some of the members felt that aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture were adopted because they were rich in good moral content. They actually enabled believers to preserve good morals. Since the Shona and Ndebele, people had certain moral principles before joining the NBC of Zimbabwe it was commendable that their moral principles be observed. The NBC of Zimbabwe could not exist without the backing of those aspects of the local culture. Thus, she realized that these aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture were equally important and could not be shunned. This account for the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. What I highlighted above is in line with what was discovered by Anthony (2012:236). The other basic reason for inculturation in Africa as seen by Anthony is the provision of a rich ground for integrating the culture of a particular people in the life of the church. Thus, through inculturation a rich ground for including various marriage rituals of the Ndebele and Shona cultures in the activities of the church is promoted.

4.2.4.2 Winning believers to Christ

Table 4.11 shows that 19 (17.9%) of the Shona and Ndebele respondents thought that the NBC of Zimbabwe incorporated aspects of Shona and Ndebele cultures to motivate people to believe in Christ. Table 4.11 above indicates that seven (6.6%) of the Shona and 12(11.3%) of the Ndebele respondents thought that the NBC of Zimbabwe had to incorporate some of the cultural practices to win believers to Christ.

At church A in Midlands region in December 2017, I noted that some NBC of Zimbabwe members were married to unbelievers. In this case, the incorporation of their Shona and Ndebele cultural practices catered for their cultural beliefs. In addition to that, some members, although Christians, still upheld their Shona and Ndebele cultural beliefs. Thus, the NBC of Zimbabwe identified with cultures and traditions of members as a way of attracting them to the church.

Most of the interview results that I got in January 2017 at E and F churches confirmed this, which shows that National Executive members, pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members and the lay members were after winning believers to Christ. For instance, according to church committee member F4 (Interview 14, 23 January 2017) in Matabeleland region:

As the NBC of Zimbabwe members, we accommodate some Shona and Ndebele marriage cultural practices so that the believers will be easily converted to Christ since we will be making use of their cultural practices.

As such, they will not feel to be out of place when in the church. More so, this is done in fulfilment of the Great commission given by Jesus Christ.

This has resulted in the increase of members in the NBC of Zimbabwe churches, since they found it difficult to limit people's rituals.

What I discovered above is in line with Soosamariam (2006, 1) who notes that in the process of transmitting the Good News, evangelisation must purify culture. Therefore, cultural elements must be reflected. It is therefore prudent that in the inculturation of the Gospel message, its meanings and values must be declared to the hearers using their own cultural symbols and language to enable them to feel at home in their own culture and be excited about sharing in the mission of the Universal Church, this refers to the church universal. The NBC of Zimbabwe has taken such an approach.

4.2.4.3 Preventing disputes

Table 5.11 also shows that 19 (17.9%) of the Shona and Ndebele respondents were of the opinion that the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were adopted to avoid or do away with unwanted misunderstanding within the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies. It actually helps in dealing with conflicts among believers. In this case, 10(9.4%) of the Shona and nine (8.5%) of the Ndebele respondents agreed that the NBC of Zimbabwe had to adopt some of the cultural practices as a way of preventing disputes in the church.

Table 4.11 above shows that the Shona and the Ndebele respondents believed that some of the cultural practices were adopted in NBC of Zimbabwe ceremonies because of parents' desires. For instance, in the conduct of the marriage ceremonies, the parents and relatives of the bride and groom took leading roles. As such, NBC of Zimbabwe abided by what the parents and relatives prescribe so that the marriage ceremonies would be run smoothly.

Together with this, my observations of the Shona and Ndebele believers at D church on the 13th of November 2016 showed that in the conduct of a wedding ceremony not all families were Christians or were from the NBC of Zimbabwe. As a result of that, the marriage ceremony had to follow their cultural practices since they were playing a vital role.

This was supported by the interview results of the Shona and Ndebele interviewees on the 14th of November 2016 at that church, which showed that the bride and the groom sought authorisation from their parents and family to wed in the NBC of Zimbabwe. According to Elder D2 and Deacon D3, the couple that wedded on the 13th of November 2016 sought permission from the parents so

that they could wed. Pastor B1 had to abide by the requirements of the couple's parents and relatives. Thus, some of the cultural practices like payment of lobola were brought into the NBC of Zimbabwe ceremony because of the desires of the parents and relatives.

Along with this, many observation results I got in January 2017 at C, E and F churches in Bulawayo town part of Matabeleland region, revealed that when marriage ceremonies were conducted conflicts would often arise between the church and family members or among family members. People fought if their cultural practices were discarded during marriage activities. Therefore, some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were incorporated in the NBC of Zimbabwe as a way of resolving conflicts in the event that there were cultural differences. Hence, the blending helped in solving the clashes within the NBC of Zimbabwe wedding ceremonies.

4.2.4.4 Biblically commendable

Furthermore, table 4.11 shows that 27 (25.5%) of the respondents thought that Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were biblically commendable. Because of that they were incorporated into marriage rituals. In this case, 16 (15.1%) of the Shona and 11 (10.4%) of the Ndebele respondents thought that the NBC of Zimbabwe adopted Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in her marriage ceremonies because some of them were biblically admirable.

Most of the interview results I got at churches B and D in Matabeleland in November 2016 concurred with this. These results indicated that some cultural practices were in line with the biblical models of marriage. For instance, Elder D2 pointed out that in Genesis 24, Eliezer was given a bride price by Abraham. In the Bible Rebecca was chaperoned when she was going to her in-laws. Jacob had to work for his two wives as part of payment of the bride price. In John 4:1-9, Jesus attended the wedding at Cana. All this showed that some aspects like payment of lobola were adopted because they were biblically accepted. However; I observed that the NBC of Zimbabwe has not adopted polygamy although it is biblical. I have observed that some holy men of God in the Christian Bible were polygamists. For example, Abraham, David, Solomon, Gideon and Elkanah were polygamists. Elkanah had two wives, namely Hannah and Peninnah in I Samuel 1:1-8. The NBC of Zimbabwe does not accept polygamy because it is against the constitution of the Convention, which strongly encourages monogamy.

4.2.4.5 Believers to feel at home

Table 4.11 shows that 9 (8.5%) of the Shona and Ndebele respondents were of the opinion that the NBC of Zimbabwe incorporated the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices so that the members

would feel accommodated in the running of the marriage rituals. In this case five (4.7%) of the Shona and 4 (3.8%) of the Ndebele respondents were of the opinion that the NBC of Zimbabwe adopted some of the cultural practices so that the Shona and Ndebele believers would feel at home in the churches of the Convention.

Most of the interview results at churches B, C and D in November 2016 and January 2017, confirmed that some NBC of Zimbabwe members who felt that some of their cultural practices were strongly discouraged and ended up observing those cultural practices privately. For instance, Deacon D3 (Interview 2, 14 November 2016) said, “Even though I am a Christian, I have to dedicate my daughter to our family ancestral spirits when she is going to her in-laws so that she gets protection. I do this secretly because the pastor strongly preaches against it saying this is demonic”.

The above statement was confirmed by Elder B2 (interview 5, 17 November 2016) saying,

Although the church leaders preach and teach on the fact that we should not venerate our ancestors I strongly believe the church should allow us to honour our ancestors in line with marriage issues, so that we feel accommodated. If we are continuously discouraged from venerating our ancestors, we will do that in privacy.

From this response, I concluded that these Ndebele believers valued the role of ancestors even though the Convention leaders strongly preached against it.

Moreover, I have observed that in the NBC of Zimbabwe some Varembe people practised the Komba initiation rites to initiate girls. The Varembe boys (*majaha*) are circumcised during the *murundu* initiation rite even though they were in the NBC of Zimbabwe. In this ritual, appointed elderly men of the Varembe group were the ones to lead such rites. For Shoko (2009:1) this is conducted in the months of June and July. Like the girls, they were initiated from the state of boyhood to that of manhood. The National Executive members, pastors, elders, and deacons allowed this group of Shona practising their initiation rites because they were trying to make them to feel at home in the Convention as well. “The Komba rite is intended to move a mature girl (*mhandara*) from the state of girlhood to that of womanhood. It was also meant to initiate uncircumcised non-Varembe (*vashenji*) women who marry Varembe men into their female traditions and customs” (Shoko 2009:1). This is done because that Komba ritual is significant to Shona-Karanga people in the NBC of Zimbabwe as well. If the Varembe people were discouraged from observing their rituals in the church, they would conduct them in privacy as well.

Therefore, some of the cultural practises were fused into the NBC of Zimbabwe for various reasons. Some of the reasons were that they wanted to keep the cultural practices, win people to Christ or that they were biblically commendable. Some of the practices were adopted so that believer would feel at home. Another reason was to observe the desires of the parents. In the next section I examine some of the possible benefits of blending the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices with the church marriage rituals.

4.2.5 Possible benefits of blending Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in marriage rituals

Continuing the dimension of reflexivity (Banda 2010:128), I examine the following question: What are the possible benefits of these practices to the Convention members? From most of the questionnaires, interviews and observation results, I established that there were numerous possible benefits of blending Shona and Ndebele cultural practices with those of the NBC of Zimbabwe in the running of church marriage rituals. In the next segment, I scrutinise those possible benefits. Table 4.12 shows there were a number of possible benefits for blending the NBC of Zimbabwe with the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices relating to marriage rituals.

Table 4:12 Distribution of respondents according to the benefits of blending Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects with the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals (N=106)

Possible benefits	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand Total N=106	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
More believers won to Christ	20	18.9	12	11.3	32	30.1
Long lasting marriages	10	9.4	14	13.2	24	22.6
One combined wedding ceremony	2	1.9	4	3.8	6	5.7
Cultivation of good morals	10	9.4	3	2.8	13	12.3
Creating strong relationships	13	12.3	18	17.0	31	29.2
Total	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

4.2.5.1 More believers won to Christ

Table 4.12 shows that 32 (30.1%) of the total respondents thought that one of the possible benefits of blending Shona and Ndebele cultural practices with those of the NBC of Zimbabwe was that numerous believers would be won to Christ. In this case, 20 (18.9%) of the Shona respondents and 12 (11.3%) of the Ndebele respondents thought that numerous believers would be lured to Christ.

Thus, the blending of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices with those of the NBC of Zimbabwe would encourage more people to join the NBC of Zimbabwe in exalting the name of Jesus Christ. Many Shona and Ndebele people would realise that the Convention supported some of their cultural practices.

This was supported by pastor A1 (Interview 7, 8 December 2016) in the Midlands region who said, “It makes it easy for the Shona people to be incorporated into the NBC of Zimbabwe, because they can easily identify themselves with the church practices...”. Church committee member A4 supported this view (Interview 8, 8 December 2016). The church committee member said, “Those cultural practices, which are not sinful, should be promoted in order to strengthen the bond of love between families and church. This will help us to fulfil the Great commission as we easily witness in a friendly environment”. Thus, blending creates an opportunity for evangelism and soul winning.

4.2.5.2 Long lasting marriages

Table 4.12 shows that 24 (22.6%) believed that blending resulted in long-lasting marriages in the NBC of Zimbabwe. In this matter, 10 (9.4%) of the Shona respondents and 14 (13.2%) of the Ndebele respondents were of the view that the combination brings long-lasting marriages.

National Executive Member NEM1 (Interview 3, 14 November 2016) confirmed this when he said, “Lasting marriages are created because the new couple gets a lot of support from the families. The bride and groom are taught how to love and respect each other in a marriage set up”. Church committee member A4 (Interview 8, 8 December 2016) elaborated on this view saying, “The families would assist the NBC of Zimbabwe when she wants the new couple to perform Christian rites of marriage”.

Therefore, from the above responses I established that the blending of NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals with Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in Midlands and Matabeleland regions had a possible benefit of establishing strong marriages, which created a strong church, strong community and even a strong Zimbabwean nation.

4.2.5.3 One combined wedding ceremony

Table 4.12 above shows that a total of 6 (5.7%) of the respondents thought that one combined wedding ceremony was a benefit of the unification of NBC of Zimbabwe with Shona and Ndebele cultural marriage practices. In this case, 2 (1.9%) of the Shona respondents and, 4 (3.8%) of the

Ndebele respondents thought that it results in a single combined wedding ceremony instead of two. Therefore, a sizeable proportion of the respondents thought that one combined wedding ceremony was a benefit of blending Shona and Ndebele cultural practices with the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

Most of the interview results I got from B, C, D and E churches in November 2016 and January 2017 confirmed that anyone who had been married through a traditional wedding ceremony was expected to wed again in the church. For instance, Elder D2 (Interview 1, 14 November 2016) said, “If we inculturate the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe weddings the couples will not have the challenge of organising two different weddings, because I have observed that anyone who has conducted a traditional wedding ceremony is expected to wed in the church as well.”

Pastor C1 (Interview 9, 15 January 2017) confirmed the above response saying,

In the NBC of Zimbabwe, anyone who has been married through a traditional wedding ceremony has to wed in the church even after having a traditional ceremony. Because of that, the couple and family members are overburdened by conducting two different wedding ceremonies. This is a result of the fact that in the NBC of Zimbabwe, we greatly value a wedding ceremony conducted in the church. As such, the blending of the cultural aspects solves the problem of conducting two wedding ceremonies.

From the above responses, I concluded that the inculturation of NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals with the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices results in a combined wedding ceremony, which is highly commendable.

What I established in the NBC of Zimbabwe agreed with Okonkwo (2010:1), who pointed out that traditional marriage and Christian marriage ceremonies presently, existed as two distinct rites in some parts of Africa, and asked whether there was a way of bringing the two together to avoid any form of duplication or multiplication of rituals. The church has always indirectly recognised marital institution as a cultural product. Inculturation was the answer to the above question. The solution to the question could be to establish a marriage ceremony where couples would sincerely experience the happy marriage between culture and church. This marriage rite would solve both the traditional and Christian hassles (Okonkwo 2010:1). Thus, conducting one combined ceremony could be one of the great benefits.

Linus (2014) has a project entitled, *Liturgical inculturation of traditional marriage preparation and celebration: A challenge for Evangelisation in South-South Nigeria*. In the process of missionary activities and the evangelisation of Calabar and its surrounding areas in South-South Nigeria, missionaries did not take the genuine human and cultural principles of the indigenous

people into account. This was especially so, with regard to the rituals in preparation for and merriment of marriage. The missionaries regarded most of these rituals as irreconcilable with the Christian message and faith (Linus 2014).

Marriage is one celebration that has established a very severe and challenging pastoral condition for evangelisation and pastoral office. The situation has brought about battle between the traditional marriage festival and the church wedding. Baptised Christians have to undertake double marriage rites, namely the traditional marriage ceremony as well as the church marriage rituals. After the traditional marriage, the couples have to wait for a much-extended time before carrying out a church marriage. The cause being that they would have spent so much money on the traditional marriage. Because of that, they do not have enough money to pay for the church wedding. What is painful is that although the community recognises them as husband and wife, the couples participate in the Eucharist without sharing in the Holy Communion. This constitutes a challenge to both pastors and theologians. Therefore, the goal of the project was to exhibit the need for inculturated Christian marriage preparation and celebration (Linus 2014).

The inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe, by having one combined wedding ceremony, therefore has the benefit of reducing the problems caused by having two wedding ceremonies to the bride, groom, relatives, friends and the Convention as well.

4.2.5.4 Cultivation of good morals

Table 4.12 shows that a total of 13 (12.3%) of the Shona and Ndebele respondents strongly emphasised the notion that the inculturation of marriage rituals resulted in the cultivation of good morals especially among the youths. In this case, 10 (9.4%) of the Shona respondents and 3 (2.8%) of the Ndebele respondents thought that the blending of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices with those of the NBC of Zimbabwe in the running of church marriage rituals cultivated good morals. Along with this, such practices encouraged the NBC of Zimbabwe members not to be fornicators or adulterers, since they would emulate what the bride and the groom would have done. Thus, part of the population sample strongly agreed that blending results in the cultivation of good morals especially among the youths.

The interviews conducted confirmed this. Pastor C1 (Interview 9, 15 January 2017) said, “Combining the NBC of Zimbabwe with the Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects promote good principles especially among the youths, since they will emulate what would have been done by the

bride and groom”. Thus, inculturation cultivates good morals even among the youths, since they will copy what the bride and the groom would have done.

4.2.5.5 Creating strong relationships

Table 4.12 shows that several people thought that blending Shona and Ndebele cultural practices with the marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe created strong relationships. In this case, 31 (29.2%) thought this. In this case, Table 5.12 shows that 13 (12.3%) of the Shona respondents and 18 (17.0%) of the Ndebele respondents thought that the blending helped to unite the families within the NBC of Zimbabwe. The National Executive Member NEM2 (Interview 2, 20 January 2017) agreed with this saying,

The blending of Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects with those of the NBC of Zimbabwe has another benefit of building strong cultural ties. Along with that, the Shona and Ndebele marriage cultural aspects are not lost due to the NBC of Zimbabwe influence. The believers would not be disadvantaged when they join the NBC of Zimbabwe. Through that, their cultural ties would not be lost at all.

This was confirmed by my observations in November 2016 at church D and in January 2017 at church C. I noted that during the conduct of the church wedding ceremonies families gathered at the church auditorium to witness and celebrate the union of the bride and groom.

I have also observed that because of the strong relationship between the church and families there have been minimal adjustments for both the church and families in cultural procedures connected with the marriage ceremonies. Both the Shona and Ndebele respondents said that the blending of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices with those of the NBC of Zimbabwe had the possible benefit of building strong relations between families and the church. There is less clashing of interests between the unbelieving family and church over marriage ceremonies. This resulted in the accommodation of people from different cultural backgrounds, which ultimately promotes strong relationships in the Convention.

What I observed on the building of strong cultural ties is in line with what was found by Soosamariam (2006:1), writing about Malaysia. Soosamariam noted that in Malaysia people spontaneously used familiar symbolic expressions or rituals in marriage and funeral celebrations, since Malaysia is composed of people of Indian, Chinese and Malay heritage. Because most Catholic Christians are converts from Indian and Chinese religions, one cannot just talk about one Malaysian culture. Given such a situation in Malaysia Soosamariam (2006:1) declares, “Therefore, people of other faiths in Malaysia appreciate the Catholic Church for giving such a profound value to their native cultures and showing deepest respect for their religious traditions...”.

An Indian Catholic marriage never takes place without a *thali*, because this tradition has been into the Catholic liturgy, which is a clear example of inculturation. *Thali* means string and is associated with the English expression, “He tied the knot”, to describe that a person got married. The NBC of Zimbabwe similarly incorporated aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture into its marriage rituals.

The benefits of blending Shona and Ndebele cultural practices with those of the NBC of Zimbabwe therefore include long-lasting marriages, more believers won to Jesus Christ, the building of strong relations and many more. In the next section, I will look at some of the constraints to the inclusion of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe’s marriage rituals.

4.2.6 Barriers to the inclusion of cultural practices

In line with the dimension of ecclesial scrutiny (Banda 2010:128) I ask the following question: What are the barriers to the inclusion of aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture in the marriage rituals of the Convention? I therefore analyse the perceived obstacles to their inclusion. The results are presented in table 4.13

Table 4:13 Distribution of respondents on barriers to the inclusion of the cultural practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe (N=106)

Barriers	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand Total N=106	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not biblical	16	15.1	15	14.2	31	29.2
Outdated cultural aspects	8	7.5	7	6.6	15	14.2
Not knowing the value for conducting them	6	5.7	7	6.6	13	12.3
Clash of doctrines	8	7.5	11	10.4	19	17.9
Many ethnic tribes with varied cultures	8	7.5	6	5.7	14	13.2
Expensive and oppressive	7	6.6	3	2.8	10	9.4
Danger of syncretism	2	1.9	2	1.9	4	3.8
Total	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

4.2.6.1 Not biblical

Table 4.13 above shows that a total of 31 (29.2%) of the respondents thought that some of the Shona and Ndebele marriage practices are contrary to the Bible teachings. In this case 16 (15.1%) of the Shona respondents and 15 (14.2%) of the Ndebele respondents said that one of the constraints for including some of the cultural practices was that they were not biblical, for example, ancestor veneration. Shona and Ndebele cultural activities, like appeasing the ancestral spirits clash with biblical principles, hence including them could cause conflicts within the NBC of Zimbabwe.

I observed that the Shona and Ndebele believers of churches A, B, C and D in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions were not allowed to consult ancestral spirits. In this case, they would be seeking guidance and protection on the success or failure of the marriage. The courtship process, the payment of the bride price and the NBC of Zimbabwe wedding ceremonies were not to be dedicated to the ancestral spirits. I also observed that some of the parents and relatives of a bride-to-be or groom-to-be even consulted witchdoctors and diviners on the type of families where their sons or daughters intend to marry. Some families might be having avenging spirits called *Ngozi* in ChiShona or *Uzimu* in IsiNdebele language. Conducting such actions is considered “satanic,” “demonic”, “devilish” and even “paganism²⁷”

I observed that some members of the NBC of Zimbabwe continued to consult witchdoctors and diviners. They even sought protection and guidance from the ancestral spirits during the courtship process, payment of lobola, and the conduct of the wedding in privacy. The interview results I got on the 14th of November 2016 at church D confirmed the above view. For instance, deacon D3 (Interview 2, 14 November 2016) said,

Some Shona believers from the NBC of Zimbabwe dedicate the bride price like *mombe youmai* (beast paid to the bride’s mother as bride price), to the ancestral spirits. Failure to do so may result in *ngozi* (avenging

²⁷ According to Dr. Oyeronke Olademo 2008:5 states that i ‘The word “pagan” comes from the Latin word “*pagamus*” which means “a village dweller” or “country man”. It also means a person living far away from the civilized community. When applied in religion it used to describe a person who was not a Jew, Christian or Muslim. Later it acquired a derogatory connotation referring to Africans as people who have no religion.

ii) The word pagan could mean either a country –dweller or civilian (military slang). Christians adopted it as slang for those for those who had not enlisted by baptism, in the battle of the Kingdom of God against the Kingdom of Satan. So, Christians speak of “pagans” as Jews speak of “Gentiles” and Muslims speak of “kafirs”. It can be used in a derogatory way by Christians who think themselves superior to unbelievers, but that is not its primary meaning. Many people nowadays proudly call themselves Pagans with a capital P.

spirit) which may end up in the bridegroom paying countless beasts to the bride's mother since the ancestors will not have been informed about the beast paid.

Thus, in inculturated marriage rituals, the ancestral spirits are not to be consulted for guidance and protection but still some NBC of Zimbabwe members consult them privately.

In traditional Ndebele culture, the ancestral spirits (*amadlozi*) were consulted to seek their official permission during the marriage proceedings (Nyathi 2001:117). I noted that when marriage ceremonies were taking place there was an involvement of two families. When the bride was taken away from her family, the spiritual dimension of her family must be informed of the changes taking place. According to Nyathi (2001:117), the ancestors (*amadlozi*) must be called to bless and protect her where she would be going. This concurs with Bozongwana (2000:24), when he said, "Before the girl leaves for the groom's home, a special rite is performed on her in the house and in the cattle kraal. *Amadlozi* must be told that she is leaving the home and the spirits must look after her...". When the bride arrives at the groom's family, the spiritual family is informed and accept her as an addition. It is my observation too that blessings from the ancestral spirits were needed in Ndebele traditional marriage rituals. However, such a situation is not tolerated in the marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe.

In Shona culture too, during the payment of lobola, there are certain beasts that are dedicated to ancestral spirits. For instance, the mother of the girl gets her most valued beast (*mombe yeumai*) (Mawere and Mawere 2010:227). This beast is again dedicated to the maternal spirits as well (Gombe 2000:106). Many respondents thought this was not acceptable because veneration of ancestral spirits is not biblical.

Belief in the supernatural powers of the ancestral spirits is not accepted in the NBC of Zimbabwe, since it is not biblical. Such cultural practices are not in line with God's word; as such, they cannot be condoned. The NBC of Zimbabwe strongly preaches against belief in ancestral spirits, so those cultural practices that link to the ancestral spirits are not tolerated at all in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

This was confirmed by most of the interview results I got. For instance, the interview results I got at church E on the 23rd of January 2017 supported that. Deacon E3 indicated that the Bible preaches against the idea that a bride be committed to ancestral spirits, because Christians worship God through Jesus and not ancestral spirits. NBC of Zimbabwe Christians strongly avowed that it was against the Word of God. Some Shona and Ndebele pastors and other members were extremists who felt that Shona and Ndebele cultural practices should not be included at all in NBC of

Zimbabwe wedding ceremonies. Those members who were strongly against the inclusion of Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects in the conduct of wedding ceremonies strongly advocated a purely Christian approach to marriage.

Some of the observation results showed that some of the members of the NBC of Zimbabwe thought that everything that is associated with African traditional culture is inherently evil and demonic. This has been exacerbated by the fact that NBC of Zimbabwe members have been exposed to western ways of doing things.

4.2.6.2 Outdated cultural practices

Table 4.13 also shows that a group of 15 (14.2%) of the respondents thought that some of the cultural practices should not be used in the NBC of Zimbabwe since they were outdated. In this case, 8 (7.5%) of the Shona respondents and 7 (6.6%) of the Ndebele respondents thought that some of the cultural practices were seen as out of date. For such respondents, using such cultural practices was not proper since they saw them as too traditional, primitive and backward. As modernised people, they could not tolerate such practices. This was confirmed by most of the Shona and Ndebele observation and interview results from B, C and D churches. Pastors B1 and C1; elders B2, C2, D2; deacon D3 and lay member C5 in November 2016 and January 2017 all expressed similar views on this.

Distrust for things African has been a challenge to the implementation of inculturation in Africa. Many Africans seem to have fear and shame of being Africans. The slave trade and later colonialism by the whites made the blacks believe that the Westerners were a superior race. In French colonies, the rule of “assimilation” made the use of indigenous languages difficult, because the Western rulers regarded them as inferior to the French language. English was taught in schools of the British colonies. Because of this, many Africans have come to believe that their vernacular is inferior (Anthony 2012:243). For people with such views the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe was not commendable at all.

4.2.6.3 Not knowing the value of conducting cultural rituals

Table 4.13 shows that 13 (12.3%) of the respondents indicated that one of the reasons why some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were not used in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals was that as modern people they did not know the value of such marriage rituals. In this case, 6 (5.7%) of the Shona respondents and 7 (6.6%) of the Ndebele respondents held this view. This

was because they belonged to a new generation, which is not conversant with most of the traditional cultural practices.

This was confirmed by Pastor C1 (Interview 9, 15 January 2017) at church C who asserted,

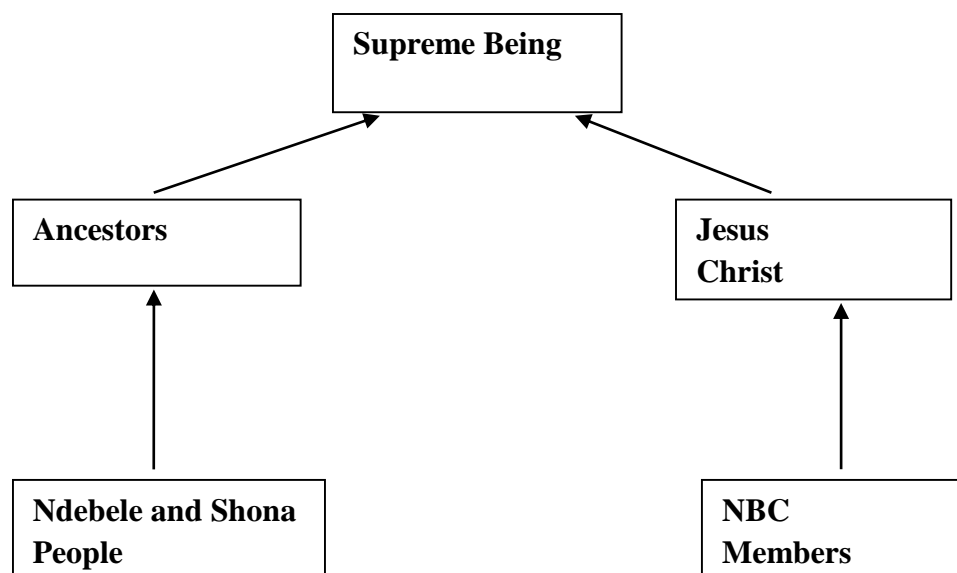
When I asked some elderly Shona people, some of them indicated that they did not know the value of some of these Shona cultural aspects like *kusungira* ritual and reasons for not marrying in November. Some would just say these are cultural beliefs, which they found observed in the Shona traditional culture since time immemorial.

This was supported by a member C5 (Interview 11, 15 January 2017) who said, “I cannot be made to respect a ritual that I do not know its value. As a modern person I uphold what I know the value attached to it”. From the above, I concluded that some Shona cultural rituals were not observed in the NBC of Zimbabwe, since people did not know the value attached to some rituals like *kusungira* ritual.

4.2.6.4 Clash of doctrines

Table 4.13 shows that a total of 19 (17.9%) of the respondents thought that another constraint is the clash of doctrines. In this case, 8 (7.5%) of the Shona respondents and 11 (10.4%) of the Ndebele respondents held that view. From my interview results at churches B and CI I concluded that in the Shona and the Ndebele cultures the people believed that the ancestral spirits were intermediaries between God and people, whilst members of the NBC of Zimbabwe believed that Jesus Christ is the intermediary between Christians and God.

Figure 5 Diagram 4.1 showing Jesus Christ, Shona and Ndebele ancestors being intermediaries to the Supreme Being



Most Shona and Ndebele observation results in November and January 2017 supported this. For instance, in some churches like B and C churches it was shown that some aspects of the Shona and Ndebele marriage culture involved appeasement of ancestral spirits. This was done through the slaughtering of beasts and offering of prayers and snuff to ancestral spirits. This is called (*kudeketera/kuteura*) in ChiShona language or *ukuthethela* in Ndebele language. This was done to acknowledge the marriage of the couple. Some rituals used herbs as part of their procedures. Some of the NBC of Zimbabwe church members regarded such acts as demonic and devilish. Thus, I can say some church members may not be comfortable with merging the Shona and Ndebele cultural rituals with the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

From the observations and interview results, I noted that it is difficult to select which Shona and Ndebele cultural practices to follow in the NBC of Zimbabwe. I have observed that although polygamy is biblical and cultural it clashes with the constitution of the Convention. For instance, paragraph five of Article III: Doctrinal basis of the constitution reads, “Recognising monogamy as the ideal state of family life according to the New Testament, this church places on record its adherence thereto”. So, accepting polygamy was not allowed, as it would weaken the NBC of Zimbabwe beliefs. Inculturation of the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals could therefore in some instances lead to clash of doctrines. Thus, clash of doctrines is one of the constraints on the inculturation of the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

4.2.6.5 Many ethnic tribes with varied cultures

Table 4:13 shows that a total of 14 (13.2%) of the Shona and Ndebele respondents were of the opinion that the NBC of Zimbabwe was composed of many ethnic tribes with varied cultures. In this case, 8 (7.5%) of the Shona respondents and 6 (5.7%) of the Ndebele respondents thought that this was an obstacle to inculturation of marriage rituals.

From the observation of churches, A, B, C, D, E, and F in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions it was apparent that these churches had numerous indigenous cultural tribes. In these churches, I noted that the Sotho, Tonga, Venda, Kalanga, Shona, Shangaan, Chewa and Ndebele people make up the NBC of Zimbabwe. Since the Convention is made up of members with different cultural backgrounds, it becomes a challenge to adopt only the cultural marriage values of the Shona and Ndebele people when there are members of various other ethnic tribes within the NBC of Zimbabwe. Each group represented would then want to be catered for. Given that scenario, it

becomes a problem to the Convention, because every ethnic tribe in the Convention would want to be represented in terms of marriage cultural rituals.

Several interview results I got from churches B, C, D and E in the Matabeleland region in December 2016 confirmed the above view. One of the elders, D2 from church D (Interview1, 14 November 2016) said,

Since the NBC of Zimbabwe is composed of the Shona, Ndebele, Kalanga, Venda, Shangaan or Sotho people, each ethnic group would then want her marriage cultural aspects to be inculturated. Such cultural groups are seen in our churches in Matabeleland region, which cover Gwanda, Bulawayo and Victoria Falls towns. Such a scenario would then cause conflicts and confusion within the Convention. Pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members as well as the lay people will face challenges in the conduct of marriage rituals.

This was confirmed by Pastor C1 (Interview 9, 15 January 2017) who said,

Our NBC of Zimbabwe in Matabeleland and Midlands regions is composed of believers of multi-cultural backgrounds. The Convention is made up of believers who belong to Shona, Ndebele, Kalanga, Venda, Shangaan and Sotho ethnic tribes. Promotion of a single culture could bring divisions. Each tribe would want her cultural practices to be accommodated in the running of the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

The existence of various ethnic groups within the NBC of Zimbabwe could be one of the limitations to the inculturation of marriage rituals, as it could cause conflicts and confusion within the Convention.

4.2.6.6 Expensive and oppressive

Table 4.13 shows that a total of 10 (9.4 %) of the Shona and Ndebele respondents thought that some of the cultural practices were a bit expensive and oppressive. In this case, 7 (6.6%) of the Shona and 3 (2.8%) of the Ndebele held that view. Most of the observation and interview results confirmed such views. For instance, in November 2016 the respondents at church B and in January at church C revealed that the payment of lobola among the Shona looked a bit expensive and oppressive as compared to the Ndebele one. One of the Ndebele interviewees Pastor B1 (Interview 4, 17 November 2016) even said,

In our Ndebele, culture we strongly encourage our sons not to marry from the Shona society because the Shona lobola charges are very high compared to the Ndebele ones. At times, some Shona parents demanded too much lobola from the sons-in-law. This is an unfortunate situation since some church members are poverty-stricken people. They do not have the means at all.

On the side of the Ndebele culture, I have observed that the Ndebele culture expected a couple to bear children. Once the couple has failed to produce children, they encourage the husband to marry a second wife. This in some ways promoted polygamy. Some of the bridegrooms end up being promiscuous as a way of trying to find someone who bears children. This becomes dangerous

especially this era of HIV and AIDS. All these are limitations that affect the adoption of some of the cultural practices in the Convention marriage ceremonies.

Most of the interview results also showed that some Shona marriage cultural practices are oppressive. The interviews at churches B, C and D confirmed this. For instance, according to Elder B2 at church B (Interview 5, 17 November 2016),

Patriarchs in many Shona families force Shona women into submission, where the man is regarded as the head of the household. When a Shona groom pays the bride price for a wife, he thinks it is normal to subject that wife to societal norms. The man thinks that the woman has no powers to say whatever she really thinks if it opposes her husband's views.

This was also supported by Shona Pastor A1 (Interview 7, 8 December 2016) who posited,

I have noted that the husband would normally say to the wife in Shona language, "*Ita zvandinoreva usingandibvunzi nokuti uri mukadzi wandakaroora. Ndini baba vapano pamba,*" which means, "Do as I say without questioning since you are my wife. I am the head of this house". More so, the act of kneeling down when serving a husband food indicates respect but it also signifies putting down a gender.

Pastor A1 and elder B2 both thought that some of the Shona and Ndebele marriage customs were expensive and oppressive. It then becomes a problem to inculturate such practices into the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

What I noted the NBC of Zimbabwe is similar to what was noted by Mangena and Ndlovu (2013) who pointed that the bride price (*roora*) among the Shona is expensive. In a paper they presented at the 1st Africana Womanism Conference in Harare from 27-29 October 2010, Janhi (1970:33) says that in the ancient times, for the Shonas the payment of *roora* was made in form of one or two cows and a few bags of maize or rapoko. Some suitors either would work in the fields or simply gave in hunted game as payment of *roora*. The bride price was always in two payments namely *rutsambo* and *roora* (Mangena and Ndlovu 2013:475). Bourdillion (1982) says *rutsambo* was the initial payment associated with the girl's sexual rights. The payment conferred on the husband exclusive sexual rights over his wife. This explains why adultery with a married woman was and is still punishable (Mangena and Ndlovu 2013:475).

It is quite disturbing to note that the expense, especially in the Shona culture, delays those who wish to get married. A number of youths take ages to marry since they cannot afford the expensive bride price. At times, one may be asked to pay eight to ten head of cattle, a blanket, jug and many more items. In chapter two under 2.2.3.1 on Shona traditional wedding procedures I indicated that in these modern times the groom has to pay number of charges to the in-laws like *vhuramuromo* (small fee paid by a father-in-law for opening his mouth), *matekenyandebvu* (payment for stroking

beard given to a father in law in terms of marriage transaction), *mombe yeumai* (beast given to the mother-in-law in terms of marriage transaction) and many others. These are paid on top of huge sums of money charged for lobola and *rusambo*. This is one of the constraints that hinder the incorporation of some Shona marriage practices into the NBC of Zimbabwe.

In the modern Shona society, these main requirements of the bride price have still been maintained. However, some new elements have been added. These include grocery requirements. The following charges have also become part of the *roora*. The groom has to pay *vhuramuromo*, *matekenyandebvu* (small fee paid by a father-in-law for opening his mouth), *pwanyazhowa* (one of the beasts which is part of lobola which cannot be returned after divorce), *mafukudzadumbu*, *mafidyongo amai* and other charges as well. Some in-laws even ask for cell phones and cars as part of the bride price payment. Some of the Shona communities have a separate charge for a girl who gets married soon after University graduation. Such a girl attracts a high charge because she possesses a fresh educational certificate (*chitupa chinyoro*). Thus the modern Shona bride price is becoming too expensive compared with what was happening in the olden times of traditional Shona culture Mangena and Ndlovu (2013: 476).

In some cases, the father would also ask for a certain amount of bride price (*pfuma*) called *rugaba /rusambo*, which is meant to cover the heavy responsibility the parent underwent in raising the daughter. The groom is also expected to pay a head of cattle (*danga*), thus making it even more expensive (Mawere & Mawere 2010:226). Traditionally, this stage is a gift of cattle. Normally the number of beasts may range between eight and ten. Nowadays, this can be paid in the form of equivalent cash. In this case, the father of the girl gets his own bull (*mhindura*). This has to be dedicated to the paternal spirits (Gombe 2000:104). It might be worth noting that this is a constraint since the NBC of Zimbabwe is opposed to such things. On the other hand, the mother of the girl gets her most valued beast (*mombe yeumai*) (Mawere and Mawere 2010:227). Gombe (2000:106) points out that this beast is dedicated to the maternal spirits as well. One can say the payment of lobola among the Shona is expensive. Dedicating bulls to ancestral spirits showed that it was not biblical and would therefore not be acceptable in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Some Shona and Ndebele cultural practices are thought to be expensive and oppressive, which is a barrier to their inculturation in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. In the next paragraph, I examine the last of the limitations to inculturation of marriage rituals.

4.2.6.7 Danger of syncretism

Table 4.13 shows that a total of 4 (3.8%) of the Shona and Ndebele respondents thought that one of the constraints is the danger of syncretism. In this case, 2 (1.9%) of the Shona respondents and 2 (1.9%) of the Ndebele respondents held this view. They thought that inculturation would end up diluting the Christian doctrine of the NBC of Zimbabwe. At the end, there would be syncretism in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Adoption of Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects into the NBC of Zimbabwe would at times divert Christians from the norms and values of the church doctrine. Some of the members would end up taking advantage of the church doctrine. They might end up putting so many of the cultural practices into the church that it would dilute the essence of Christianity in the conduct of NBC Zimbabwe wedding ceremonies.

Most of the observation and interview results confirmed such views. For instance, in November 2016 the respondents at church B and in January at church C revealed that adoption of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices results in syncretism. One of the Ndebele interviewees Pastor B1 (Interview 4, 17 November 2016) even said,

If the National Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe allows members to use certain cultural practices freely like consulting diviners on marriage issues since they would have been given a leeway to make use of Ndebele cultural aspects regarded as biblical. By so doing, they will be practising syncretism within the Convention.

One of the elders, D2 from church D (Interview1, 14 November 2016), supported the above view saying, “Adoption of certain cultural practices results in some National Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe members using the Shona cultural practices in the pretext that that the Convention would have allowed it”.

What is revealed by Table 4.13 above is also in line with what was found by scholars like Pruitt (2007:23) and Anthony (2012). These scholars strongly asserted that the fear of syncretism is one of the obstacles to inculturation in Africa generally, and not just in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Pruitt (2007:23) writes “The chief concern levelled at the advocacy of the inculturation process is the perceived danger of syncretism...”. Helmer Ringgren (1996) defines syncretism as “...any mixture of two or more religions...” (Pruitt 2007:23). Some clergy and lay members in other churches are afraid that what is called inculturation may turn out to be another version of what fetish priests, witchdoctors and fortune-tellers’ practise in African traditional culture (Anthony (2012). Therefore, some church members may regard inculturation in the church as a sign of fetishism. Thus one of the limitations of the inculturation of the marriage ritual was that the biblical doctrines would be diluted together with the essence of Christianity in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Moreover, the aspect of the danger of syncretism as a constraint was in line with what was asserted by King (2000: 1). For instance, this scholar declared that one of the ways that fear of syncretism could hinder inculturation is that some fear that the truth of their tradition would be lost or corrupted (King 2000:1). For instance, in this study some of the Christians in the NBC of Zimbabwe said that they were afraid that the truth of the Christian tradition might be lost. The Shona and Ndebele people may think also that their tradition would be lost again. Therefore, several constraints hindered the adoption of some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices into marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe. These obstacles included the fear of syncretism; the idea that some were not biblical and that others were oppressive and expensive.

4.2.7 Perceptions of the promotion of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe

The last of Kritzinger's dimensions is that of spirituality, and in this section, I examine the type of spirituality practised by the leaders and members that underscore the inculturation of the marriage rituals. Table 4.14 below shows how the respondents perceived the promotion of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

Table 4:14 Distribution of respondents on perceptions on the promotion of cultural rituals (N=106)

Perceptions on promotion	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand Total N=106	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	51	48.1	49	46.2	100	94.3
No	4	3.8	2	1.9	6	5.7
Total	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

Figure 6 Pie Chart 1: Distribution of respondents on perceptions of the promotion of cultural rituals

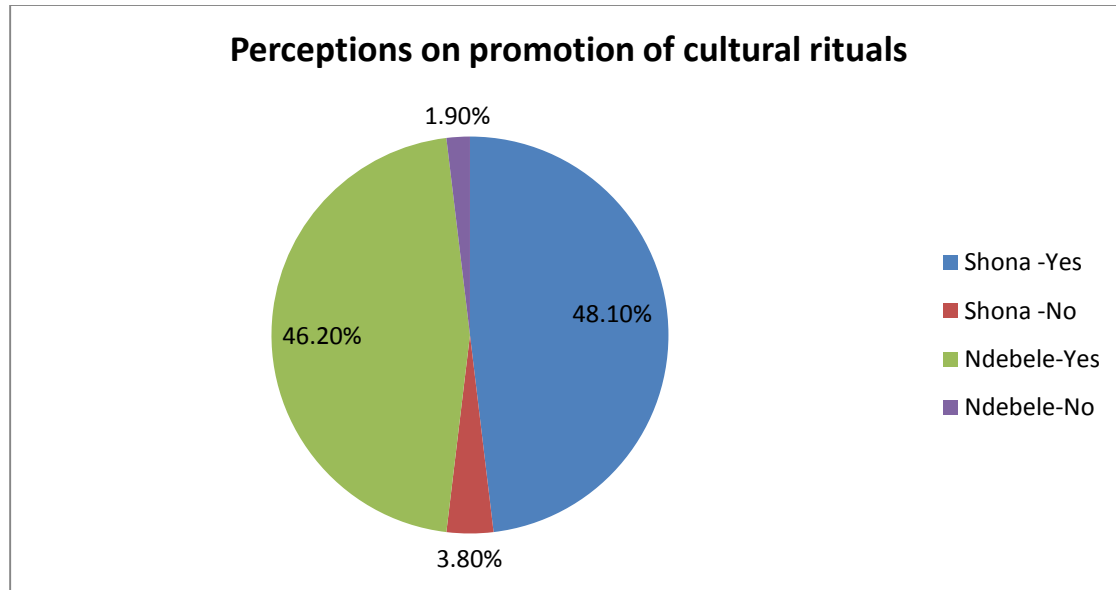


Table 4.14 and pie chart 1 above shows that a total of 100 (94.3%) of the Shona and Ndebele respondents indicated that some of the Shona and Ndebele marriage rituals should be promoted in the NBC of Zimbabwe. In this case 51 (48.1%) of the Shona respondents and 49 (46.2%) of the Ndebele respondents were for that idea. On the other hand, 6 (5.7%) indicated that these cultural practices should not be promoted at all. In this case, 4 (3.8%) of the Shona respondents and, 2 (1.9%) of the Ndebele respondents were opposed to the incorporation of these cultural practices.

The support for the inculturation of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe was confirmed by most of the observation results. For instance, the majority of all six assemblies: A, B, C, D, E and F churches from November 2016 to January 2017 supported the view. The observation results concurred with the majority of questionnaire respondents results which supported the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. The majority of the Shona and Ndebele participants, however, thought that only those practices that were in line with the Bible should be promoted, whilst those that were not could be discarded. The majority of the respondents were in favour of inculturation of marriage rituals but that group reiterated that what was to be promoted was that which was in line with the NBC of Zimbabwe's Christian doctrines. Anything against the Christian Bible was to be done away with. They thought that such rituals should be promoted because they helped in producing an authentic African church as well as preserving the traditional Shona and Ndebele cultural practices.

For the majority of participants some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices build strong relationships within the marriage. That group of respondents did not see the payment of lobola as objectionable, if they were not too expensive and not oppressive. They thought that lobola payment strengthens family ties; the husband is likely to value and respect his wife. The payment is made in 'order to legalize the marriage', and any marriage that does not involve the payment of the bride price 'looks like casual sex or prostitution'.

This group of participants emphasised that part of the bride price should be promoted because it is a strong basis for respect to both the married couple and in-laws. As such, lobola should be encouraged since it promotes strong marriages, a strong church, strong community and strong nation.

The observation results showed that some cultural practices preserve *Ubuntu*. As such, there was a great need for them to be inculturated in the running of the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. For example, the initiation rituals played a significant role of guiding and counselling people. This also helped in reducing the rate of divorce in the church, community and nation. These should be promoted because they encourage good morals and respect.

However, I also observed that a minority were strongly against the inculturation of the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. For this group the inculturation of NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals should not be done at all. Thus, a small percentage of the respondents was against the idea of combining Shona and Ndebele cultural practices with the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

This could end up causing conflicts, since the NBC of Zimbabwe is made up of members from varied cultural backgrounds (as noted under section 4.2.6.5) with many ethnic tribes and with varied cultures. These include Shona, Ndebele, Sotho, Kalanga, Venda, Shangaan, Tonga and Chewa people. Each ethnic tribe would therefore need to be represented in terms of cultural practices. This could then cause serious divisions and fights in the NBC of Zimbabwe, if each cultural group wanted its own cultural practices to be adopted in the inculturation of marriage rituals. That could cause confusion to the believers in the Convention. Even the marriage officers could have a tough time to understand each cultural practice to be used in the conduct of marriage rituals.

Some members resisted the inclusion since it could cause serious divisions in the church. This could deter some prospective members from joining the NBC of Zimbabwe since they would be

thinking that the members were not genuine Christians. Whilst most of my observations showed that people were in support of inculturation, a few did not.

Most of the interview results confirmed the need for the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices to be incorporated into the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals since they would act as an evangelism tool to win people to Christ Jesus. However, the interviewees emphasized that only those cultural practices that do not contradict Christianity should be incorporated. National Executive Members NEM1 and NEM2 supported this. For instance, the National Executive member NEM1 (Interview 3, 14 November 2016) said,

The Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects should be inculturated in the NBC of Zimbabwe since they have many benefits. Their inculturation into the marriage rituals would lure more people to Christianity. This greatly alleviates boundaries that can be built between the Christians and the anti-Christians. For Christianity to be realized, it should start by adopting some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural rituals.

National Executive member NEM2 said, “The Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects should be promoted since they enable the Shona and western culture to co-exist and even enable the Shona and Ndebele not to lose their culture.”

This was confirmed by Pastor C1 (Interview 9, 15 January 2017) who said, “My opinion is that good cultural practices are to be maintained, while those contrary are to be abolished and never be heard in the practices of the NBC of Zimbabwe”

Some of the interviewees who supported the inculturation of marriage rituals NBC of Zimbabwe also emphasized the point that modification of some of the cultural practices adopted into the Convention should be done. This would promote genuine Christianity in the Convention. The views of the National Executive members were also supported the majority of interviewees like A1, A4, B1, B2, C2, D2, D3 and E3 as well

However, a few of interview results indicated that the inculturation of marriage rituals should not be done since some of the cultural practices were not biblical. Those with reservations thought that some members could practise ancestor veneration, since no one would be able to monitor such activities in people’s homes. They also thought that if a green light was given to inculturation it might lead to syncretism in the NBC of Zimbabwe. If that happens the essence of the Christian, gospel may finally be lost and the NBC of Zimbabwe might end up losing her Christian flavour. To make matters worse, it would be difficult at the end to draw a line between Christianity and Shona and Ndebele cultures, since the two would have been fused into each other.

A few of the interview results showed that this group was strongly against anything with Shona and Ndebele culture in it. They thought Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were demonic and satanic in nature. Some of these respondents noted that some of the cultural practices were also expensive and oppressive. They thought that the Shona rituals linked to payment of lobola should be done away with. One of the National Executive Members NEM3 (Interview 13, 23 January 2017) said, “In my opinion Shona cultural aspects should not be promoted in the running of marriage rituals because they make marriages to be very expensive and not affordable especially to the poor and non-working class”. That group also pointed out that there were certain Shona families who demanded too much money or cattle if the brides were highly educated.

Deacon D3 (Interview 2, 14 November 2016) also said, “I do not support the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe because the Shonas are too greedy. They love money too much. They think when they give their daughter to the groom they are selling her to him. It looks more of business other than building of relationships of the two.” Thus, the group did not buy the idea of promoting the cultural rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

To comment on this, I believe the different results I got were a result of different perceptions of the respondents. The respondents perceived the issue of inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in Midlands and Matabeleland regions in different ways. The majority saw the value of inculturating NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals, whilst a few did not support the view.

The cultural environment one grew in determined these responses. For instance, those who supported the use of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the NBC marriage rituals were likely to have grown up in such a cultural environment. On the other hand, those brought in a Christian cultural environment could not value such things. Those brought in a traditional Shona or Ndebele cultural setup, which promoted Shona and Ndebele cultural practices, would value such cultural practices even when they were born again Christians. The African traditional culture and the more cosmopolitan culture of those who had grown up in Christian culture determined their perceptions of inculturation. Christian culture refers to cultural practices that are widespread to Christianity religion.

Magesa (2004:10) found that a small group of young respondents expressed their conviction that inculturation was unnecessary. They thought that both Africa and Christianity must change with time. Anthony (2012:241) also found that many African theologians do not see the need for inculturation; they still prefer to walk, talk, and live in the white men’s culture, which they regard

as superior to theirs. In this case, white culture is the same as Christian culture that I have mentioned in the previous paragraph. Therefore, I concluded that some NBC of Zimbabwe members still looked down upon African culture.

I established that the Shona and Ndebele respondents had mixed feelings on the promotion of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the running of NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. The majority of them thought that those practices that were in line with the Bible ought to be promoted. That group of respondents also emphasised the fact that those practices that were not biblical should be discarded as well. However, a minority was strongly against the promotion of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe. This group pointed out that some of the cultural practices were not biblical; as such, they could lead to a clash of doctrines. Some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were expensive and oppressive to run. They pointed out that it could lead to conflicts within the NBC of Zimbabwe, since there were some other ethnic tribes like the Sotho, Tonga, Venda and the Kalanga whose cultural practices would not be incorporated. Thus, some preferred traditional culture to Christian culture whilst the other group was vice versa.

I can also conclude that in the NBC of Zimbabwe there were two categories of people with regard to the inculturation of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the Convention's marriage rituals. One of the groups preferred pre-modern culture to modern culture. In fact, the former preferred rural to urban culture, whilst the later was vice versa. Lobola was a custom in a cattle-keeping culture but urban people do not generally keep cattle, and many formerly rural cultures that practiced the bride price abandoned it when they became urbanised. In some parts of the world, there are Christian cultures that have been rural for centuries, and in those places it is the urbanised people who are seen as abandoning Christian culture. Having established that, in the next paragraph I summarize chapter four and then point to the upcoming chapter five.

4.3 Summary

In this chapter 4, the data from the conducted survey was analysed. The responses were analysed to show specific tendencies in the NBC of Zimbabwe church members and church officials. Their agreements and disagreements were examined. I attempted to answer the following questions based on Kritzinger's seven dimensions of the praxis matrix namely 1) Agency: Who are the agents/leaders who work towards inculturation? What are their position vis-à-vis the rest of the NBC of Zimbabwe? What are their views on inculturation? 2) Contextual understanding: What are the factors that influence the agents and the society/church members who are affected by this

inculturation? What are the contexts of the members of the NBC of Zimbabwe as Shonas and Ndebeles? How do the respondents perceive inculturation in the Convention from their context?

3) Ecclesial scrutiny: What are/were the marriage practices in the churches? What kind of inculturation could help facilitate greater engagement between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and the Ndebele cultures? What are the barriers to the practice of such rituals in the Convention?

4) Biblical tradition: How do the leaders and the members interpret the Bible vis-à-vis marriage practices? What would be an appropriate spirituality for Inculturating marriage practices?

5) Discernment for action: What actions are taken to inculturate marriage practices? What causes the blending of these practices in this Convention?

6) Reflexivity: Is there any reflection from leaders and members on the impact of the inculturation of marriage practices? What are some of the aspects of Shona and Ndebele cultures that have been fused in the NBC of Zimbabwe? Which are the possible benefits of these aspects to the Convention members?

7) Spirituality: What type of spirituality is practised by the leaders/members that underscore the inculturation of the marriage rituals?

Through this, I gave an assessment of the demographic data of the Shona and Ndebele respondents that I used in the research study on the missiological critique of the inculturation of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe. I also scrutinised the position on the use of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices at the time one became a member. The role of culture in the NBC of Zimbabwe and the cultural practices that have been adopted were established. The motivation for incorporating the cultural practices, and the possible benefits of their incorporation were delineated and assessed. The constraints and the perceptions on the incorporation of the Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects were analysed as well. In the next chapter 5, a discussion on the research findings will be made and I shall align my research findings with the seven dimensions of the praxis matrix.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION ON RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss my research findings. This chapter fits quite well in the phase 3 of the Pastoral Cycle or Praxis cycle. This chapter therefore has a theological reflection using the Praxis Cycle. I reflect on the NBC of Zimbabwe's own principles and praxis as it relates to life and (dis-empowerment) and reflect on this in the light of the Biblical and theological concepts. The aim of this research was to give a missiological critique of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. I examined and explored the kind of inculturation that could help expedite greater engagement of inculturation between the Convention and the Shona and Ndebele cultures. The "Pastoral Cycle" guided me to achieve this. I adapted the Pastoral Cycle to direct my research. Firstly, under "Pastoral planning" I observed the challenges of inculturating marriage practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe and focused my research questions according to the seven dimensions of the "Praxis Matrix" of Holland and Henriot as adapted by Kritzing (Banda 2010:128).

In Chapter 1, I focused on orientation and an overview of the study covering topics like the motivation for the study, a statement of the problem and research questions. I outlined the purpose and objectives of the study, the research methods and research techniques. I described the limitations and assumptions of the study. I reviewed the literature on the topic of inculturation and located the study in the discipline of Missiology through definition of terms. In Chapter 2, I explored the context analysis of the NBC of Zimbabwe. The social and church analysis were explained. Chapter 3 focused on survey of the marriage rituals among the NBC of Zimbabwe members. I conducted my research via questionnaires, observations and interviews, which I have presented in Chapter 4, entitled data analysis of conducted survey. The responses were analysed into survey specific tendencies in NBC of Zimbabwe church members and church officials. Their agreements and disagreements were examined. In chapters 5 and 6, I will consider the theological significance of my findings, using the seven dimension of the "Praxis Matrix" in the light of the "Research Questions" in section 1.3.

5.1 Dimension of Agency

The first dimension of the Praxis Matrix concerns Agency: Who are the agents/leaders who work towards inculturation? What is their position vis-à-vis the rest of the NBC of Zimbabwe? What are their views on inculturation?

I have noted that there were a number of agents/leaders, who worked towards the inculturation of marriage rituals in NBC of Zimbabwe. These agents had certain positions vis-à-vis the rest of the NBC of Zimbabwe, and they had varied views on inculturation.

5.1.1 Demographic data of respondents

I will present the demographic characteristics of the respondents in this section in order to show how it affects their role as agents, in line with the first dimension. Kritzing's dimension of agency asks the following question: Who are the agents/leaders who work towards inculturation? What are their position vis-à-vis the rest of the NBC of Zimbabwe? I have identified the following demographic variables that I think they could affect the outcome. The demographic variables in the analysis are gender, age, position, and experience in a position, highest academic qualifications, highest professional qualifications and years of experience as a member of the NBC of Zimbabwe. This is in line with Wyse (2012:1) who said, "Characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, education, profession, occupation, income level and marital status are all typical examples of demographics that are used in surveys..."

The demographic data that I analysed in this section is for the following questionnaire respondents: three (3) National Executive Members, six (6) pastors, twelve (12) elders, fifteen (15) deacons, seventeen (17) church committee members and fifty-three (53) lay members of the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. The participants are from the Shona and Ndebele cultures. One hundred and twenty-five (125) questionnaires were distributed to respondents and one hundred and six (106) were returned, giving an eighty-six percent (86%) return rate. This response rate is good enough to give generalised conclusions if one considers what Fincham (2008:1) says, "There are now higher expectations for survey response rates. Response rates approximating 60% for most research should be the goal of researchers...". Only nineteen (19) questionnaires, which are sixteen percent (16%) of the ones sent out, were not returned. In addition to the questionnaires, I conducted interviews and made observations as well.

Table 5:1 Distribution of respondents according to position in church (N=106)

Position distribution in church	Shona N=55		Ndebele N=51		Grand total N=106	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
National Executive Member	2	1.9	1	0.9	3	2.8
Pastor	1	0.9	5	4.7	6	5.6
Elder	9	8.5	3	2.8	12	11.3
Deacon	6	5.7	9	8.5	15	14.2
Church Committee Member	8	7.5	9	8.5	17	16.0
Lay members	29	27.4	24	22.6	53	50.0
Total	55	51.9	51	48.1	106	100

Table 5.1 above shows that 3 (2.8%) of the respondents were National Executive members, whilst 6 (5.6%) were pastors, 12(11.3%) were elders and 15 (14.2%) were deacons. In addition to this, 17 (16.0%) were church committee members, whilst 53 (50%) were lay members. My questionnaire respondents comprised 106 people who were diverse in terms of age, gender, position in the church, highest academic qualifications, highest professional qualifications, as well as the period of years as members of the NBC of Zimbabwe. From this, I concluded that my Shona and Ndebele respondents were varied and representative enough to pass meaningful comments related to the study.

5. 1.2 Agents' views on inculturation

After considering whom the agents were in the previous section the next question in Kritzinger's dimension of Agency is: What are their views on inculturation? The results showed that there was the inculturation of marriage rituals at the time the respondents became members of the NBC of Zimbabwe.

5.1.2.1 Use of cultural practices at the time one became a member

Table 5.2 below shows the statistics from the questionnaire respondents on their views on inculturation.

Table 5:2 Gender distribution of respondents on the use of cultural practices at the time one became a member (N=106)

Gender distribution on use of cultural practices	Females		Males		Grand Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	63	59.4	36	33.96	99	93.4
No	2	1.9	5	4.7	7	6.6
Totals	65	61.3	41	38.7	106	100

From the questionnaire responses in Table 5.2 above I established that 99 (93.4%) of both the female and male respondents agreed that Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were already being used in marriage ceremonies of the NBC of Zimbabwe at the time they became members. On the other hand, 7 (6.6%) of the female and male respondents indicated that there was no use of Shona and Ndebele cultural marriage practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe at the time they became members.

Table 5.2 above shows that 63 (59.4%) females respondents agreed that Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were used in the marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe at the time they became members. However, two (1.9%) female respondents said there was no use of such cultural practices. Therefore, a majority of the female respondents acknowledged the use of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices. This is an indication that their cultural background, which had exposed them to such cultural practices, could have influenced them. Therefore, they could quickly identify the practices. Those who disregarded the idea were not aware of the manifestation of those cultural practices by the time they became members. This is an indication that they could have been influenced by their cultural extraction.

Table 5.2 also shows that 36 (33.96%) of the male respondents agreed that Ndebele and Shona cultural practices were used in the marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe at the time they became members. Like the female respondents, they could have been exposed to the kind of cultural practices. As such, they could recognise them when they manifested in the NBC of Zimbabwe. On the other hand, 5 (4.7%) indicated that there was no use of the cultural practices. The above results show that most of the female and male population sample thought Shona and

Ndebele cultural practices were being used by the time they became members of the NBC of Zimbabwe, whilst only a few did not.

The interview results showed that most females thought that there was use of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices at the time they became members of the NBC of Zimbabwe. I noted that in almost all the churches the female interviewees pointed out the cultural practices were observed by the NBC of Zimbabwe. For instance, Church Committee member A4 (Interview 8, 8 December 2016) pointed out there was use of Ndebele cultural practices at the time she became a member. According to her, *ukuvela* was practised since it was necessary for a groom to be seen by the in-laws before he married the bride. Other female interviewees from churches B, C and D supported this as well. The number of male interviewees who agreed was smaller than that of the females in the churches I conducted the interviews.

However, a Church Committee member F4 (Interview 14, 23 January 2017) disagreed with the above view. She pointed out that since 2014 when she became a member of NBC of Zimbabwe she had not seen such practices. In fact, she emphasised that it was against the NBC of Zimbabwe's beliefs and practices.

The fact that more female interviewees than male ones indicated that there was use of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices is because in the NBC of Zimbabwe, in other churches, more females attend church services than males. This is probably because the population of Zimbabwe has more females than males. Generally, females make up fifty-two percent of the Zimbabwean population whilst males constitute forty-eight percent. On this aspect, I can also say it was not just the absolute numbers, but also the percentage of males and females that differed in the table.

Along with this, the NBC of Zimbabwe females spend more time in the rural areas than males. Hence, they are more knowledgeable on the Shona and Ndebele rural cultural practices. This aspect is common in most African countries like South Africa, where males tend to go to work in cities more than females. This leads to women being more familiar with rural cultural practices.

In addition to this, Zimbabwe is a patriarchal society in which the males dominate in terms of power. The same is evident in Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* where Okonkwo dominated his household; hence, women in his household would be pushed to seek refuge in Christianity as in Zimbabwe. The women were placed at the bottom rung of the social ladder. In

the NBC of Zimbabwe, there are more women as compared to men. In both Shona and Ndebele societies, the women's roles are domestic chores like taking care of children, cleaning the house, and preparing meals for the family. Their main job description is that of being a good homemaker. A close analysis of the duties of women in such a patriarchal society shows that in social reality women in both Shona and Ndebele societies are abused and humiliated. This shows that women are exploited because of the patriarchal system. This kind of social inequality creates clashes between the subjugated and the ruling class. Therefore, because of this the oppressed class of women within the Shona and Ndebele societies take advantage of Christian virtues in the NBC of Zimbabwe to fight the ruling class of men. They attend NBC church services to challenge the authority and the power of the males.

Table 5:3 Age distribution of respondents on the use of cultural practices at the time one became a member (N=106)

Age distribution on use of cultural aspects	YES		NO		GRAND TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
20-29 years	7	6.6	0	0	7	6.6
30-39 years	30	28.3	1	0.94	31	29.2
40-49 years	40	37.7	3	2.8	43	40.6
50-59 years	15	14.2	2	1.9	17	16.0
60-69 years	7	6.6	1	0.94	8	7.5
70-79 years	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	99	93.4	7	6.6	106	100

Table 5.3 above showed that in the age range 20-29 years 7 (6.6%) respondents accepted that there was use of cultural practices at the time one became a member, whilst 0 (0%) disagreed to that. Within the age range 30-39 years, 30 (28.3%) acknowledged that there was use of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices, whilst 1 (0.94%) had the idea that there was no use of such cultural practices. In the 40-49 years' category, 40 (37.7%) accepted that there was use of the cultural practices, whilst three (2.8%) did not. In the 50-59 years' category 15 (14.2%) accepted that there was use of the cultural practices, whilst two (1.9%) did not. In the 60-69 years' category, 7 (6.6%)

noted that there was use of the cultural practices. No one was in the age category of 70-79 years. The above data shows that the 40-49 years' category had the highest number, whilst the least number was within the 20-29 years' category.

Thus, the majority of respondents agreed that there was inculturation of marriage rituals at the time they became members of the NBC of Zimbabwe, whilst just a few did not. Since one of the respondents who said he did not see any cultural practices was aged between 60 and 69 years it could be said that age did not play a role in the different views on this. Since some of these respondents were in leadership position like pastors, elders, deacons or church committee members they wanted to safeguard the NBC of Zimbabwe from any form of syncretism. Only one of the members had been in the NBC of Zimbabwe for a short period.

A greater part of interview and observation results from various churches confirmed this. For example, Pastor BI from Matabeleland in Bulawayo city, (Interview 4, 17 November 2016) in chapter 4 said that payment of lobola dates back to 1990. Pastor A1 (Interview 7, 8 December 2016) from Gweru in the Midlands, said that in 1992 his brother paid eight head of cattle as part of bride payment for him to be given permission to wed in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

However, a church committee member F4 (Interview 14, 23 January 2017) from Matabeleland disagreed with the above views saying, "No, from the time I became a member in 2015 I have not seen any of the Shona and Ndebele marriage cultural aspects being used in the NBC of Zimbabwe". Since he had only been a member for a relatively short time, however, he had not had much opportunity to observe many marriage ceremonies to see if any Shona and Ndebele cultural practices had been used. To comment on this interviewee's views, it may be concluded that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence (Martin 2007: 70)²⁸. Therefore, one can say the different results I got were a result of different perceptions of the respondents. In this case, varied perceptions of inculturation of marriage rituals were registered in the NBC of Zimbabwe in Midlands and Matabeleland regions. When one person could be seeing the phenomena of inculturation, another could be seeing something different.

The cultural environment one grew in also determined one's responses. For instance, those who perceived Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals were

²⁸ The fact that the interviewee failed to see any cultural aspects within the NBC of Zimbabwe may not be enough evidence that the inculturation of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices into the Convention's marriage rituals was not there.

likely to have grown up in such a cultural environment. On the other hand, someone not brought in such a cultural set up may not identify such practices. One's cultural background determined how one views issues. Those brought in a cultural setup that promoted Shona and Ndebele culture would quickly pick those cultural practices even when they were born again Christians. In this case, the African traditional culture or the Christian culture determined all this.

From the above information, I could also deduce that in the NBC of Zimbabwe there were two groups of people with regard to the inculturation of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe. The responses of one of the category showed that some members could identify pre-modern cultural practices than modern cultural practices. In fact, such members preferred rural to urban culture, whilst the other one did not. Payment of a bride price was a custom in a cattle-keeping culture but urban people do not generally keep cattle, and many formerly rural cultures that practised the bride price forsake it when they became urbanised. It is of interest to note that in some parts of the world, there are Christian cultures that have been rural for centuries, and in those areas, the urbanised people abandon Christian culture.

Moreover, in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* where missionaries came with new Christian teachings to the Igbo society, two groups of missionaries were evident, i.e. those who incorporated traditional practices and those who did not tolerate any inclusion of traditional practices to Christian beliefs in the form of Mr. Brown and Mr. Smith respectively. I have observed that, in the NBC of Zimbabwe these two groups of missionaries are also in existence. In this case, the above named characters can represent two kinds of missionaries in the NBC of Zimbabwe, which are also signs of two dissimilar methods to Christian mission in the 21st century.

In *Things Fall Apart* Mr Brown symbolised the missionaries who heralded the New Imperialism of the 1870s and later²⁹. He was interested in the culture of the indigenous people and conducted discussions about religion with them³⁰.

Similar to Mr Brown in *Things Fall Apart*, within the NBC of Zimbabwe, some Christians tolerated or accommodated Shona and Ndebele cultural practices. For instance, payment of lobola, ululating, clapping of hands and guidance and counselling were issues appreciated by members of

²⁹ <https://ondermynende.wordpress.com/2018/07/24/hings-fall-apart> accessed on 04 September 2018.

³⁰ Whenever Mr Brown got to a community, he would spend a long time with Akunna in his obi talking through an explainer about religion. No one of them was able to convert the other, but they learnt more about their dissimilar beliefs.

the Convention. Those who tolerated and those who did not tolerate caused conflict among Convention members.

During Mr Brown's missionary era in *Things Fall Apart* the conflict was there between traditional advocates and the missionaries in Umuofia society, but it was not pronounced. Mr Brown could contain the situation. He could give a listening ear to the members of the society. He could discuss with the elders, which helped him to understand the society much better. Such a stance promoted harmony in Umuofia society. NBC of Zimbabwe had certain respondents similar to Mr Brown.

On the other hand, Mr Smith who came after Mr Brown in *Things Fall Apart* signified the new kind of missionaries who came after the New Imperialism. With the coming of Mr Smith's missionary period, the situation changed³¹. Why did it change? Mr Smith could not tolerate ancestor veneration. I also found such types of respondents in the NBC of Zimbabwe in Matabeleland and Midlands regions. In the Convention, others could not entertain the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices as demonstrated by Mr Smith. This group was composed of respondents who saw everything as "black and white". It was more convinced of its own superiority. They could not tolerate anything outside the Christian doctrines. Such kind of respondents was more confident in themselves. They could not tolerate the dedication of brides to ancestral spirits. They strongly emphasised the intermediary role of Jesus Christ in conveying petitions to God.

During Mr Smith's period, the overzealous converts like Enoch took advantage and confronted a group of elders who administered law and justice in Umuofia society (*egwugwu*).³² Enoch unmasked one of the *egwugwu*. When that happened the *egwugwu* retaliated by destroying Enoch's compound to the ground. Enoch then had to take refuge at Mr Smith's place.

5.2 The dimension of contextual understanding

5.2.1 Factors influencing agents, as well as the context of the members of the NBC of Zimbabwe as Shonas and Ndebeles; and respondents' perception of inculturation

In assessing contextual understanding (Banda 2010:128) I ask the following questions: What are the factors that influence the agents and the society/church members affected by this inculturation? What is the context of the members of the NBC of Zimbabwe as Shonas and Ndebeles? How do

³¹ *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver tells of an American missionary in what is currently the Democratic Republic of Congo, who is a Mr Smith –type missionary, who did not come to terms with the native culture and every one of his family made his or her own distinct adaptation.

³² *Egwugwu* represented nine villages of Umuofia. They were ancestral spirits who manifested in people. This group of people was respected.

the respondents perceive inculturation in the Convention from their context? In this section, I shall examine a number of factors that influenced the agents and the society/ church members affected by this inculturation, including the contexts and the respondents' perceptions.

5.2.1.1 Educational levels

The highest academic and professional levels of education of the sample respondents greatly determined their perception of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. In this case, the responses that I got in this study were strongly affected by the sample's educational levels.

In line with highest academic qualifications table 4.5 in chapter 4, shows that 9 (8.5%) of the respondents had Zimbabwe Junior Certificates (Z.J.C) as their highest academic qualification, 25 (23.6%) had O-level or Grade 11 qualifications, whilst 32 (30.2%) had A-level qualifications. Along with this, eight (7.5%) had Masters of Arts or Masters of Science or Masters in Business Administration degree qualifications. No one had a doctoral degree or any other qualification. From such information, I found that the respondents were highly educated. Because of their academic qualifications, the respondents passed meaningful decisions related to the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Where professional qualifications are concerned, table 4.6 in chapter 4 shows that 3 (2.8%) of the respondents had Teacher Education Certificates as the highest professional qualification, whilst 5 (4.7%) had Technical National Certificates. Another grouping of 14 (13.2%) had Diplomas in Teacher Education and 14 (13.2%) had Technical National Diplomas. 12 (11.3%) had Bachelor of Education or Bachelor of Commerce degrees. 20 (18.9%) had Graduate Certificates in Education, 2 (1.9%) had doctoral degrees, whilst 23 (21.7%) had no professional qualifications. Since most of the respondents had professional qualifications, I was able to get sound contribution as to the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in Midlands and Matabeleland regions. Because the population sample was highly educated in terms of highest academic qualifications and highest professional qualifications, members were able to give informed decisions on the role of the inculturation of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe.

They were actually able to delineate the roles of inculturation in encouraging the upholding of marriage cultural rituals. For instance, table 4.9 showed that 34 (32.1%) of the respondents thought that the Shona and Ndebele cultures played the roles of encouraging upholding of marriage cultural rituals. This was supported by Pastor A1 (Interview 7, 8 December 2016) from Gweru and Ndebele

church committee member A4 (Interview 8, 8 December 2016) and Pastor BI (Interview 4, 17 December 2017) from Bulawayo. The respondents even noted that the inculturation of NBC of Zimbabwe had another role of being a basis for strong marriages. This means that through the context of educational level, they could pass meaningful decisions on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Because of their highest academic and professional qualifications levels, they were literate, enlightened, and so able to give informed answers. Because of their qualifications, they were able to appreciate whatever was in the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices that could be adopted into the church. For example, through interviews, they pointed out that payment of lobola and conduct of the *kusungira* ritual was regarded as controversial in the month of November since the month was regarded as sacred.

Because of the educational levels they had, the respondents had a lot of information on religion and culture since some had attained certificates, diplomas, degrees and doctorates in Religious Studies and Theology. That kind of education even made them appreciate whatever was in the Shona and Ndebele cultures. They could compare and contrast that with what they had in the NBC of Zimbabwe. They could then make informed decisions on the motivation, benefits and constraints of inculturation of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe.

5.2.1.2 Occupational context

5.2.1.2.1 Positions in the church

Since my respondents were from varied occupations in the church, I was able to get meaningful data from them. Table 4.3 in chapter 4 shows that three (2.8%) of the sample respondents were National Executive members, whilst six (5.6%) were pastors. Twelve (11.3%) were elders and 15 (14.2%) were deacons. Furthermore, seventeen (16.0%) were church committee members, whilst fifty-three (50%) were lay members. Thus, the varied occupations of the Shona and Ndebele respondents enabled them to provide a significant assessment related to the study on the inculturation of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe.

These diverse positions of the pastors, elders, deacons, National Executive members and church committee members enabled me to get wide-ranging relevant information from the NBC of Zimbabwe respondents. This was information in line with the fact that the inculturation of marriage in the NBC of Zimbabwe had a role of guidance and counselling and promoted unity between the

NBC of Zimbabwe and the unbelievers. More so, it was a basis for strong marriages. All such responses were a result of the occupational context of my respondents.

5.2.1.2.2 Period of experience in a position

The period of experience in a position also helped me to get meaningful information even to the barriers of inculturation within the church. Such constraints included the fact that some cultural practices were regarded as not biblical and there was fear of syncretism. More so, clash of doctrines was one of the limitations. In chapter 4, table 4.4 shows that 30 (28.3%) of the respondents had experience in position of one to five years, 23 (21.7%) had experience in position of six to ten years, whilst 10 (9.5%) had experience in position of eleven to fifteen years. Another group of 10 (9.4%) had experience in position of sixteen to twenty years. Furthermore, 22 (20.7%) had experience in position of twenty-one to twenty-five years, and 11 (10.4 %) had experience in position of twenty-six to thirty years. Thus, the Shona and Ndebele sample I worked with had a vast experience in a given position which enabled them to offer sound responses in my research study on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe of Matabeleland and Midlands regions

5.2.1.2.3 Period of membership in the NBC of Zimbabwe

The period of membership in the NBC of Zimbabwe also played an important role in the study on inculturation of marriage rituals. I noted that those who had been in the NBC of Zimbabwe for a longer period were able to provide meaningful information on inculturation of marriage rituals. Table 4.7 in chapter 4 shows that 31 (29.2 %) of the respondents had period of membership ranging from one to ten years, 25 (23.6%) had eleven to twenty years, whilst 60 (47.) had twenty-one to thirty years of experience. Such a period of membership played a significant role in the conduct of this research study. With this information, I then concluded that the respondents were well informed about the phenomena of the inculturation of marriage rituals. Thus, the respondents could provide logical and well-founded decisions on the inculturation process of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe. For instance, working with such a sample enabled me to get reliable information on the motivation for inculturation of marriage rituals like keeping aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture in the church.

5.2.1.3 Urban/ rural context

The urban/ rural context of my respondents affected the kind of results I got. Those who were born and bred in the urban set up would not appreciate the inculturation of marriage rituals with Shona and Ndebele cultural practices since they thought the practices were backward and archaic. On the

other hand, those who brought up in a rural set up appreciated the use of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe. I observed that the responses I got in this research study showed that there were two groups of respondents. The majority of the respondents seemed to prefer rural kind of cultural practices as opposed to the urban kind of cultural practices in the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. For instance, on the payment of lobola, those who preferred rural cultural practices insisted on the fact that one could not marry in November since it is a sacred month and therefore it was taboo. The ancestral spirits would be angered. However, the NBC of Zimbabwe doctrine does not believe that ancestral spirits play any role in marriage ceremonies. It is important to note that even though the Convention doctrine did not believe in ancestral spirits I observed that the members who had a rural background upheld the value of the ancestral spirits in privacy. Some even cited the controversial marriage of late MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai, who got married in November and was fined by the chief. The issue of chiefs is applicable in the rural set up.

The aspect that some respondents pointed out that in bride price payment one was supposed to pay eight to ten head of cattle is applicable in the rural set up where people own cattle. The respondents also pointed out that one could pay money that is equivalent to the head of cattle. This shows that there is a certain group, which preferred pre-Western (Christian) culture as opposed to Western (Christian) culture.

5.2.1.4 African traditional culture versus Christian culture

The study showed that there was a group of people educated in Christian mission schools, colleges and universities. That group also included those who were brought up in staunch Christian families. These would despise the use of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the Convention especially the conduct of the *kusungira* ritual and the dedication of marriage to ancestors. They regarded it as demonic. On the other hand, another group, which was brought up in unwavering African traditional families strongly supported the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Therefore, they advocated the use of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices like payment of lobola and prohibiting the groom to see the bride a day before the wedding day.

In the foregoing section I have scrutinized the occupational context of the respondents. In the next section, I examine some questions in line with Kritzingers' dimension of Ecclesial Scrutiny (Banda 2010: 128).

5.3 Dimension of Ecclesial scrutiny

I shall discuss how the church leaders assess and evaluate these marriage practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe churches. A certain kind of inculturation can help facilitate greater engagement between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and the Ndebele cultures. There are also barriers to the practice of such aspects in the Convention.

5.3.1 Scrutiny of marriage practices in the churches

From the questionnaire responses presented in chapter 4, 34 (32.1%) of the respondents thought that there are / were many Shona and Ndebele marriage practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe churches. Sixteen (15.1%) of the Shona respondents and 18 (17.0 %) of the Ndebele respondents thought that there were such practices in the church. Interviews and observations confirmed this.

The marriage practices I will take into consideration are as follows: a) Payment of lobola / bride price, b) *Kusungira ritual* c) *Ukucola* ritual d) Marrying someone whose background is known e) Wedding ceremony f) Guidance and counselling g) Initiation rituals and h) Introductions of the bride and groom to the relatives (*Kundoonekwa kwemusikana /mukomana kuhama (Shona)/ Ukuvela (Ndebele)*).

The NBC of Zimbabwe follows a congregational type of governance; therefore, the congregation as a whole primarily does ecclesial scrutiny of these practices. Congregational government can be defined as “a form of church government in which the local church is autonomous and at which the major decision affecting the church are made by members” (Winslade: 2009). Thus, in the ecclesial scrutiny of the marriage practices like the wedding ceremony, initiation ceremonies, payment of bride price or *ukucola* ritual each church of the NBC of Zimbabwe is self-governing. This kind of government permits each congregation the self-determination to determine what it regards as the will of Christ. The NBC of Zimbabwe members believe that the final authority for a church rests not in the people but in Jesus Christ. Thus, Jesus Christ is the head or Lord of the church (Ephesians 4:15, Philippians 2:11) even in matters of the marriage practices. According to Pinson (2010-2018), “Perhaps an appropriate descriptive term for Baptist church governance would be “Theo-democratic”, meaning God’s rule through all of the people”.

Because of this, in the ecclesial scrutiny of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe everything is solved at local congregational level. The pastor together with the deacons, elders, youth advisers and church committee leaders work together in handling the issues to do with the

marriage rituals. In this case, the elders, deacons and youth advisors assess the marriage rituals and the pastor is informed.

In the wedding ceremonies, the church leadership encourages the couple to pay lobola before they wed. The NBC of Zimbabwe encourages harmony between the couple and the in-laws. After that, they consult the family representatives of the couple. Normally when the groom is going to pay the bride price the elder or deacon would accompany him. After the whole process is over the couple is then referred to the marriage officer, who in turn does the pre-counselling and the post-counselling to the couple.

The marriage officer is officially trained by the Zimbabwean government and given the authority to conduct the marriage ceremony. In Ecclesial Scrutiny, the marriage officer for the Convention wedding ceremony is appointed and recommended by the President of the Convention, who is the head of the NBC of Zimbabwe. The marriage officer conducts the pre-counselling and the counselling sessions to the couple intending to wed. He or she conducts church marriage ceremony. The other duty of the marriage officer is to sign the marriage certificate and stamps it to authenticate it. In ecclesial scrutiny marriage issues are not just left up to the individual minister or marriage officer. The church leaders would also discuss the marriage rituals with the couple getting married, their parents and the negotiator / go-between called *umkhongi* in Ndebele or *munyai* in Shona.

In the ecclesial scrutiny of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe, the pastors have paramount functions in the church (1Timothy 3:1-7). Such responsibilities do not have authoritarian power but rather one of servant, spiritual leadership “not loading it over those entrusted to you” (1Peter 5:2-3). The Bible also sets high standards for deacons (1Timothy 3: 8-13). Despite all this, deacons in the NBC of Zimbabwe are expected to be servants and not governors in the ecclesial scrutiny of the marriage rituals.

In the preceding section I have delineated the scrutiny of marriage practices in the churches. In the next section, I examine the kind of inculturation that can help facilitate greater engagement between the N.B.C of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele cultures.

5.3.2 The type of inculturation that could help facilitate greater engagement between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele cultures

Because different cultural backgrounds and experience led to different perceptions among the respondents, I observed that the kind of inculturation that could facilitate greater engagement between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele cultures is varied.

Firstly, I noted that this kind of inculturation should promote the payment of the bride price. I indicated in my chapter two that Gombe (2000), Thorpe (1996) and others are of the opinion that anyone who marries from the Shona tribe has to observe the payment of lobola (*roora, amalobolo*). Inculturation should encourage payment of part of or the whole bride price as demanded by the in-laws to get permission to conduct a wedding ceremony in the NBC of Zimbabwe. This is an exhibition of love and affection for the wife-to-be. It shows great commitment of both the bride and the groom to the marriage.

According to Mangena and Ndlovu (2013: 475), in traditional Ndebele marriage, before the children were born, the girl's father paid more than the boy's father did, in the establishment of the new family. For example, he gave his daughter a beast to take to her new home. The beast was a sign to the groom's family that the bride was serious with marriage. This beast became the foundation of the home as it multiplied. It also protected the dignity of her family and hers throughout marriage. So many other rituals were carried out in the process of the legalisation of marriage. As such, inculturation of marriage rituals has to encourage observation of such practices. In urban settings where there is nowhere to keep cattle the groom and relatives in the Convention are given a number of cattle to pay like in the rural setting. However, the cattle are paid in form of equivalent cash value of the cattle.

In addition to this, according to Mangena and Ndlovu (2013: 473) traditionally in both the Ndebele and Shona customs what the groom pays was supposed to be a token of appreciation and a sign of commitment. It is also a sign of respect to the parents of the bride. The two would give a lot of value to the marriage. Andifasi (1970: 28) cited by Mangena and Ndlovu (2013: 473) supports such a position saying *roora/lobola* is "... an outward manifestation of the young man's love for his fiancé and is a safeguard against groundless divorce...". The attachment of a value to the woman was a way of according a status. From such a position I can say, this is in line with Genesis 29 verses 16 to 28 of the Christian Bible, where Jacob had to work for seven years for Rachel, which indicated a high level of commitment to the marriage. Along with this, the bride price has to be paid first enabling the son-in-law to be recognised in the family as well. So the kind of

inculturation in the NBC of Zimbabwe should make sure that such notions are put into consideration.

The inculturation should encourage that the groom and his relatives appreciate the parents or guardians for bringing up the wife-to-be. Mangena and Ndlovu (2013: 473) support such a stance when they asserted, “The bride price value also surpassed the outward expression of gratitude by the son in law; it generally compensated for the loss of a productive daughter...”. To use Bourdillion (1997) cited by the above mentioned two scholars I can say, in this modern day Zimbabwean Shona and Ndebele society, it becomes a recompense for the economic costs suffered in bringing up a daughter.

In this case, this type of inculturation should encourage the son -in-law to pay the two beasts for the father-in-law and mother-in law respectively. Mawere and Mawere (2010:227) note that in Shona traditional culture the father of the girl gets his own bull (*mhindura*), which is dedicated to the paternal spirits. On the other hand, the mother of the girl gets her most valued beast (*mombe yeumai*). This idea is also strongly supported by Gombe (2000:106). That beast again is dedicated to the maternal spirits as well. However, the kind of inculturation has to make sure that the two beasts are not dedicated to ancestral spirits since it is against the NBC of Zimbabwe’s Christian doctrines. In the Convention, the beasts are tokens of appreciation to the in-laws and not the ancestral spirits. Therefore, the process of dedicating beasts to ancestral spirits is omitted.

Sibanda (1998:109) cited by Mangena and Ndlovu (2013:473-474) makes the same point delineating some of the roles of the payment of lobola among the Ndebele. For Sibanda (1998), payment of lobola among the Ndebele had both emotional and spiritual value. Firstly, it was an expression of a feeling as well as strengthening ties between the children and their maternal ancestors through the payment of *inkomo yohlanga* (cow given to the mother of the wife). Lobola was a thank you from the son-in-law, appreciating the family that he has the courtesy of the in-laws, (*kuyisibongo somkwenyana ethakhazelela imuli aselayo ngenxayabakwabozala*). Secondly, it was valuable to both sides of the relationship. It was a sign of love to the wife and her parents. It even ensured that the husband respects his wife. Thirdly, the children born were put in the ways of their mother’s grandmothers through the custom of giving a cow to the mother-in-law. This showed that lobola payment is important in both the Shona and Ndebele cultural societies. As such, I can say the kind of inculturation has to encourage the fact that such cultural practices are followed in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

On the aspect of dedication to the paternal and maternal spirits, I can say the type of inculturation should strongly discourage such a move since by so doing it becomes a veneration of the ancestral spirits. This in some way compromises the Christian values. Therefore, the beasts that are paid should not be committed to ancestral spirits but they should be just gifts of appreciating the father-in-laws and the mother-in-laws. The ecclesial authorities like the pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members and the National Executive members emphasise that the bride and groom are born again Christians. As such, they should not be associated with the ancestral spirits. This explains why the ecclesial authorities strongly preach and against dedication of beast to the ancestral spirits.

Still on payment of lobola, the form of inculturation should provide teachings on the fact that lobola has a biblical basis. For instance, in the preceding chapter I pointed out that Genesis 34 verse 12 and Exodus 22 verse 17 strongly support such an idea. Thus, the type of inculturation should accentuate on such issues in the conduct of marriage rituals so that the Christian values are not lost in the process of inculturating the marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

Whilst it is commendable that lobola be paid, the kind of inculturation in the NBC of Zimbabwe should discourage the charging of exorbitant bride prices through preaching and teaching. For instance, from the questionnaire respondents in the previous chapter I noted that the Shona and the Ndebele respondents indicated that some of the cultural aspects were a bit expensive and oppressive.

Most of the observations and interviews confirmed this. They revealed that the general feeling from the respondents was that payment of lobola among the Shona looked a bit costly and unjust as compared to the Ndebele one. On payment of lobola, Mawere and Mawere (2010: 226) declared that the father asks for a certain amount of bride price (*pfuma*) called *rugaba /rusambo*. Such a bride price is meant to cover the heavy responsibility the parent underwent in raising the daughter. The groom is expected to pay a head of cattle (*danga*).

Gombe (2000:104) also strongly support the above opinion. Traditionally, this stage is a gift of cattle. In the modern Shona culture, at times some Shona parents and relatives of the bride demand too much lobola from the son-in-law-to-be. In this case, the parents and relatives of the bride at times charge huge and unbelievable bride price and even delay the wedding. This was substantiated by most of the interviewees, who strongly emphasised that the lobola payment among the Shona

people was high, compared to the Ndebele one. One of the Ndebele interviewees even said, “In our Ndebele culture we strongly encourage our sons not to marry from the Shona society because the Shona lobola charges are very high compared to the Ndebele ones”. In the foregoing chapter, I pointed out that some of the sons-in-laws indicated that they did not have the means. As such, this delayed some people who wished to get married. I noted in chapter four that a number of youths took ages to marry since they could not afford to fulfil the long list of the bride price. For instance, one was asked to pay eight to ten head of cattle, a blanket, jug and many more things. Some would be asked to pay even cell phones and cars. These were to be paid on top of huge sums of money that would have been charged. This caused some NBC of Zimbabwe members to cohabit after failing to meet the stipulated high bride prices. This in some way discourages some members from marrying, yet the NBC of Zimbabwe wedding ceremonies result in a strong family, which creates a strong church. All this builds a strong community, which promotes a strong nation. Therefore, the kind of inculturation should discourage charging of exorbitant bride prices and cohabitation.

In addition to this, I would like to say the paying of the exorbitant lobola within the inculturated marriage ritual is really a challenge to NBC of Zimbabwe in Midlands and Matabeleland regions. Despite the strong deterrence to overcharge by the NBC of Zimbabwe bride price in Midlands and Matabeleland, bride price arrangements are becoming more commercialised by numerous people. Therefore, it becomes a challenge to the NBC of Zimbabwe that she should guard against overcharging of the payment of bride price.

Since the payment of the exorbitant lobola within the inculturated marriage ritual is really a challenge to the NBC of Zimbabwe, the ecclesial authorities are taking frantic measures to meet the challenge. How do they do it? They urge their members not to demand an excessive bride price. More so, they give a lot of preaching and teaching against this practice. The NBC of Zimbabwe is not alone in facing such problems. Some years ago, statistics kept by a church hospital in Zululand showed that 90% of first babies were born to unmarried mothers, perhaps because by the time the prospective bridegroom had saved enough to pay the lobola the bride would be past childbearing age.

On a positive note, the kind of inculturation should preach and teach on the advantages of paying lobola in line with the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. I have observed that lobola is a decisive stabilising factor in Shona and Ndebele traditional marriage rituals and a guarantee of

indissolubility. Hatendi (1973: 144) supports this view saying, “Bride price is a significant gift, an acknowledgement of a priceless debt which the bride groom’s family group owes to the bride’s family group.... It legitimises the children born of the socially accepted union within the father’s lineage...”. Since, the bride price is important in the inculturated marriage rituals, the NBC of Zimbabwe should encourage it through preaching and teaching. As such, the inculturation should preach and teach on that in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

Whilst payment of lobola and conduct of marriage rituals should be incorporated in the NBC of Zimbabwe teachings, controversies still arise over these. I showed in chapter four that some of these controversies were over the times when the marriage rituals should be conducted. The kind of inculturation therefore should take into account such controversial matters as paying and marrying in the sacred month of November. The NBC of Zimbabwe inculturation of marriage rituals should avoid times that cause conflicts that can be detrimental to Christian values.

In chapter four, I pointed out that upholding of cultural rituals is one of the roles of culture. Inculturation has to ensure that aspects of the cultural rituals that compromise the Christian doctrines should be approached with caution. For instance, in the *kusungira* ritual of the Shona a newly married woman who has fallen pregnant for the first time is taken back to her parents to live with them from seven to eight months until the time she gives birth. This would give the mother of the pregnant woman time to monitor her daughter during the last months of her pregnancy. She was guided and counselled on how to handle the newly born baby. This was done because it would be the first time for that bride to give birth, so it is a way of trying to help her on how to handle the new baby. The pregnant person would therefore give birth at a place where she would be free and comfortable. The kind of inculturation that incorporates such practices does not compromise Christian values.

This ritual was also conducted among the Ndebele people in the NBC of Zimbabwe. The pregnant person was taken to her home area so that she gets the same guidance and counselling that is given to the Shona believers. The interview and observation results showed that the expecting mother would be taken there with a goat (*imbuzi yesitshebo*), which is killed for relish. At the same time the mother, when she has given birth, is given heat therapy (*ukuthoba*) on the stomach, backbone, thighs and any other part of the body, which may have been affected through the childbirth. A cloth is tied around the stomach of this mother throughout the period of heat therapy presumably to flatten the stomach and to reduce fat build up. This was done in the evening when she retires.

Inculcating such practices should ensure that the mother who is giving birth for the first time is given the support of her family.

In the previous chapter, however, I noted that during the conduct of *kusungira* ritual the pregnant woman is given herbs called *masuo*, which open the birth canal to be used by the new baby during delivery. There is also an application of traditional medicines on the newly born baby to strengthen him or her. Some of the herbs are applied to the head of the new baby (*kurapa nhova*). Other herbs are tied around the neck and waist to strengthen the baby. This is similar to tying a charm around the waist and neck of the baby (*intebe*) as done by the Ndebele. Inculturation should ensure that such activities are not included, since they dilute the essence of Christian doctrines within the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. At the same time, the members would seem like as if they doubt the powers of their Christian God who is all-powerful and even omniscient. Therefore, the NBC of Zimbabwe ecclesial scrutiny effected this through preaching and teaching against such practices in the Convention's marriage rituals.

Furthermore, I observed that for the Shona believers during the conduct of the ritual the male goat is slaughtered by the family of the husband. It is then cooked for everyone. Part of the meat is cooked with some herbs. On this, I would like to say, the kind of inculturation has to guard against the usage of traditional medicines, since the NBC of Zimbabwe strongly believes in God who has supernatural powers. This type of God is omnipotent and omniscient at the same time. Along with this, this Christian God is Jehovah Niece, the God who protects. Inculturation has to guard against such aspects being incorporated into the marriage rituals. The ecclesial authorities like the pastors, elders and deacons strongly preach and teach against such practices as well. This is generally found in all the NBC of Zimbabwe churches of Matabeleland and Midlands regions.

In chapter four, I also noted that the *masungiro* or *kusungira* ritual among the Shona is not just ceremony, it is a ritual. Its main objective is directed at the mother-in-law, who should confirm to her ancestral spirits that she is quite happy and then appeal to them to guide her daughter in giving birth safely. The pregnant daughter remains behind so that if there were any problems the mother would give assistance and even appeal to the ancestral spirits to intervene where necessary. I would urge that in this kind of inculturation there is a need to preach and teach against the consultation of the ancestral spirits during the conduct of the *kusungira* ritual because the NBC of Zimbabwe as a Christian Convention does not believe in the powers of the ancestral spirits. As a Convention, she strongly believes in the powers of Jesus Christ, who is an intermediary between God and man.

Moreover, on controversial rituals like *kusungira* and *ukucola* rituals the NBC of Zimbabwe National Executive Committee should come up with policies guiding believers on such issues. The Convention has even provided a substitute of encouraging the members to believe in an omnipotent God.

More so, in chapter four I also observed that from a sociological perspective although women contribute to the production of human life and play an essential role in the continuity of human life, they are regarded as a source of danger in the Shona and Ndebele cultures. Blood of menstruation and birth is regarded as source of danger. This is shown by the fact that the Shona and Ndebele cultures expect someone who gives birth for the first time to go to her place of birth to deliver to avoid contamination of the husband. This is almost in line with the Churching of women ritual practised in the Anglican church. This is a ritual where a woman who has recently given birth is to be set apart and then re-introduced into the religious and social life by means of a special ceremony. In Christian tradition in this ritual a blessing is given to mothers after recovery from childbirth. This rite comprises thanksgiving for the woman's survival of childbirth and is even executed when the child is miscarried or has died unbaptised (Wikipedia, the Free encyclopaedia). Such a rite of passage has both biblical and pagan roots although its liturgical expression in England can only be traced from the twelfth century. The Wikipedia, the Free encyclopaedia notes that even though the Churching women rite contains no elements of purification, it was related to Jewish practice as noted in Leviticus 12 verses 2-8. Leviticus verses show that a woman who gives birth to a son is counted unclean for 40 days and for twice as long after the birth of a female child. In light of the New Testament, the Christian ritual draws on the imagery and symbolism of the presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2 verses 22-40). In these verses it is recorded that the Virgin Mary followed this custom of bringing her new baby son into the Temple and being purified (Natalie 1995). The Churching of women ceremony has now fallen out of fashion at least in Western Christianity but the Orthodox Church still hold it (Field 2012:1) In the Convention cleansing rituals were done to neutralize the source of pollution in women. From this, I can say, in the Shona and Ndebele cultures like in the Anglican church women were viewed as threatening to life through their polluting powers, this explains why the pregnant woman has to give birth at her home area. As such, the kind of inculturation has to guard against such views.

The type of inculturation has to ensure that only those aspects of marriage rituals that are biblically commendable should be promoted. For instance, bride price payment, no premarital sex and guidance and counselling have to be promoted. At times, the adoption of some marriage rituals

has caused the problem that some members of the NBC of Zimbabwe might end up even bringing in some rituals, which may not be biblical at all, since it is not possible to monitor each ritual observed. For instance, it is not biblical that a bride-to-be is committed to the ancestral spirits when she leaves her home for marriage and when she gets to the home of her in-laws. Inculturation should take such issues in the NBC of Zimbabwe into account.

Moreover, the kind of inculturation should ensure that the role of the Shona and Ndebele cultures is emphasised in the NBC of Zimbabwe, since they are a basis for good marriages. Through these cultures, strong marriages are created since two families are brought together before the marriage ceremonies. Loyalty and trustworthiness is encouraged between the two families. The Shona and Ndebele cultures give a basis for marriage foundations by providing proper communication channels between the two parties. Above all, there is authentication of the marriage because the parents need to be involved in the giving or acceptance of the bride.

Together with this, the type of inculturation should ensure that the Shona and Ndebele cultures continue to encourage respect for the in-laws through the marriage rituals. In chapter four, I pointed out that most of the questionnaires, observations and interviews showed that for a bride and groom to wed in the NBC of Zimbabwe wedding ceremonies there is consent of the parents or guardians. All that is in line with what Manyoba (1991: 71) said, "...African marriage was not just the coming together of two individuals to start a family. It was the coming together of two individuals as representatives of their families or clans to start a family...". This indicates that to the Shona, the conception of marriage is linear, extended and social, whilst that of the NBC of Zimbabwe is individualistic since the newlywed couple leave their parents to start a new home. As a result, the inculturated marriage ritual seems to be individualistic and not communal in nature. Given such a scenario, the kind of inculturation should encourage the respect for the in-laws in the conduct of marriage rituals.

The fact that the inculturated marriage ritual is individualistic and not communal makes it a challenge to the Shona and Ndebele communities in Midlands and Matabeleland regions. In fact, the two families become united through the medium of a man and a woman. Because "...all alliances in Africa create links of fraternity" (Inculturation IMBISA document: 31), marriage in Midlands and Matabeleland regions cannot be a private affair. It should not be privatised at all. The NBC of Zimbabwe should actually realise that in marriage the communitarian dimension is

essential and highly commendable. She is urged to build on this type of dimension, which forms part of our African culture and worldview through the inculturation of marriage rituals.

Along with this, wedding ceremonies are conducted after negotiations or payment of the bride price has been made. Introductions and marriage bans are made to the NBC of Zimbabwe members after the consent of the parents or guardians. During the wedding ceremony, a parent or a guardian hands over the bride to the groom during the marriage ceremonies. Therefore, I would urge the kind of inculturation to ensure that the parents or guardians play leading roles in the conduct of the marriage rituals.

The kind of inculturation should make sure that the Shona and Ndebele cultures play a role of guidance and counselling within the NBC of Zimbabwe. The aunts and uncles should guide and counsel the bride and the groom before proceeding with marriage preparations. Bridal showers and bachelors' parties should be held. The preaching and teachings should cultivate good morals among the youths. Conflict resolutions counselling is provided for the believers. Thus, the kind of inculturation should make sure that aunts' and uncles' guidance and counselling complements that of the pastors, elders, deacons and the church committee members of the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Above all, the kind of inculturation should enable the Shona and Ndebele cultures to promote unity between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the unbelievers as emphasised in chapter four. The kind of inculturation should make sure that the Shona and Ndebele cultures bring more followers into the NBC of Zimbabwe by promoting good relations between the NBC of Zimbabwe believers and those that are not.

The kind of inculturation that should play significant role in the NBC of Zimbabwe therefore includes encouraging lobola payment, upholding cultural rituals, encouraging respect of in-laws, guidance and counselling as well as promoting unity between the NBC of Zimbabwe members and the unbelievers. In the next section, I shall focus on the barriers to the inculturation of such practices in the Convention.

5.3.3 Barriers to inculturation in the Convention

In the question, "What are the barriers to inculturation of cultural practices in the Convention?" most of the questionnaires, interviews and observations showed that there were several barriers. The cultural backgrounds and the doctrinal differences of the respondents played an important role on such issues.

Firstly, some of these cultural practices were regarded as not biblical. Table 4.13 in chapter 4 shows that 31 (29.2%) respondents thought that some of the constraints were that the Shona and Ndebele marriage cultural aspects are contradictory to the Bible teachings. In this case, 16 (15.1%) of the Shona respondents and 15 (14.2%) of the Ndebele respondents were saying one of the constraints to including some of the cultural practices was that they were not biblical, for example ancestor veneration. This was confirmed by the observation results from churches A, B, C and D. Dedication of beasts to ancestors has been strongly attacked. The respondents who had a conservative position condemned the use of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe

Mawere and Mawere (2010:227), when writing about the Shona culture, noted that during the payment of lobola there are certain beasts that are dedicated to ancestral spirits. For instance, the mother of the girl gets her most valued beast (*mombe yeumai*). This beast is again dedicated to the maternal spirits; as well, (Gombe 2000:106). The NBC of Zimbabwe regards as not biblical veneration of ancestral spirits.

In addition to this, the danger of syncretism was raised as one of the obstacles to the incorporation of Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects into the NBC of Zimbabwe. On the issue of syncretism, I may say it is not an African concept but a western one meant to mock local African attempts at inculturation efforts and /or anything good from African cultures. Therefore, in the inculturation of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe such constraints have to be overcome.

Table 4.13 in chapter 4 also shows that a group of 15 (14.2%) thought that some of the cultural practices could not be used in the NBC of Zimbabwe since they were seen as outdated. In this case, 8 (7.5%) of the Shona respondents and 7 (6.6%) of the Ndebele respondents held this view. For these respondents, using such cultural practices was not proper since it was too traditional, primitive and backward. As modernised people, they could not tolerate such practices.

Shona and Ndebele observation and interview results from churches B, C and D confirmed this. Pastors B1, C1, elders B2, C2, D2; deacon D3 and lay member C5 in November 2016 and January 2017 revealed this. The reluctance to accept some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices into the NBC of Zimbabwe's marriage rituals because they are seen as outdated is in line with the findings of Anthony (2012:243). According to him, distrust for things African is a challenge to the implementation of inculturation in Africa.

Table 4.13 in chapter 4 shows that 19 (17.9%) thought that another constraint is the clash of doctrines. In this case, 8 (7.5%) of the Shona respondents and 11 (10.4%) of the Ndebele respondents took that view. From interviews and observations, I established that the Shona and the Ndebele people generally believed that the ancestral spirits are intermediaries between God and people, whilst members of the NBC of Zimbabwe believe that Jesus Christ is the intermediary between Christians and God. This makes it difficult to select which cultural practices to follow and which ones to leave out since they are many. Although polygamy is biblical and cultural it clashes with the constitution of the NBC of Zimbabwe, which strongly preaches monogamy.

Another barrier is that there are many tribes within the NBC of Zimbabwe apart from the Shona and Ndebele. These include the Venda, Tonga, Sotho, Shangaan and Kalanga. Table 4:13 in chapter 4 shows that 14 (13.2) were aware that the NBC of Zimbabwe is composed of many tribes with varied cultures. In this case, 8 (7.5%) of the Shona respondents and 6 (5.7%) of the Ndebele respondents accepted this. This group asserted that the Sotho, Tonga, Venda, Kalanga, Shona, Shangaan, Chewa and Ndebele people make up the NBC of Zimbabwe. Since the Convention is composed of members with different cultural backgrounds, it becomes a challenge to adopt the cultural marriage values only of the Shona and Ndebele people. Each group represented would then want to be catered for. This could cause a lot of confusion in the running of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe. It already causes fights and divisions within the NBC of Zimbabwe. It could therefore cause a lot of confusion and extra work for the pastors, elders, and deacons in any given church.

To solve such problems, I think the NBC of Zimbabwe leaders like National Executive Committee members, pastors, elders, deacons and church committee members should learn and appreciate the cultural practices of the congregants within the shortest period. Along with this, the leaders like pastors, elders and deacons should engage the services of people of that cultural extraction. In this case, the Sotho, Venda, Kalanga, Ndebele, Shona and Shangaan people should be actively involved in the marriage cultural issues in the Convention, instead of leaving everything in the hands of the pastors who may be foreigners to certain cultural issues.

The congregants of the NBC of Zimbabwe should also align and adjust to the pastors' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. I have observed that in certain situations pastors may not come from a specific indigenous group like Sotho, Venda or Kalanga. For instance, a Shona pastor may be pastoring in the Matabeleland region, yet may have a Shona background.

In the preceding paragraphs, I have noted that in the NBC of Zimbabwe there is a group of respondents who did not support the incorporation of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe. They did not support the pre-modern culture but regarded themselves as modern people, since they said the cultural practices were outdated.

In the foregoing section, I have established that there were many limitations to inculturation of Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects into the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. Having discussed on some of the hindrances the coming section focuses on the questions in line with the Dimension of biblical tradition.

5.4 Dimension of biblical tradition

The NBC of Zimbabwe leaders and members interpret the Bible vis-à-vis the marriage practices in line with what the constitution of the Convention regards as biblical. They are conservative in their application of the biblical principles. The leaders and members promote payment of lobola because they believe that this was done in the Old Testament and New Testament. For instance, a number of verses from the Bible support this. Elder B2 from Bulawayo in the Matabeleland region (Interview 5, 17 December 2016) cited Genesis 34:12 as supportive evidence. When Shechem spoke to Jacob, Dinah's father and brothers said that a price and gift for the bride should be made. In the New Testament, Jesus attended the wedding at Cana. They accept monogamy, basing this on the Convention's constitution and its biblical support. They do not support polygamy since it is not in line with their constitution, although this is found in the Bible, since some holy men like Abraham, Jacob, Elkanah and many more were polygamists. They do not support ancestor veneration, since this clashes with their doctrinal belief of worshipping God through Jesus Christ as pointed in John 14:6, where Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." Therefore, an appropriate spirituality for inculturating marriage practices should be that one "which arises from a creative and dynamic synthesis of faith and life, forged in the crucible of the desire to live out the Christian faith, authentically, responsibly, effectively, and fully" (McGrath 1999:9). In short, I can say this type of spirituality is that which animates the NBC of Zimbabwe believers' life, that which moves a person's faith to greater depths and perfection.

This kind of stance is also in line with 2.9.2.1.1 above on the conservative position of the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. This National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. released an official position declaration in 2012 that regards marriage as the exclusive joining of a man and a woman³³.

From the foregoing paragraphs, I have observed that the biblical tradition supports the beliefs and practices of the Christian culture. This shows that the members are conservative in their application of biblical principles. In the next section I examine the dimension of discernment for action.

5.5 Dimension of discernment for action

In considering the dimension of discernment for action, the NBC of Zimbabwe has taken a number of actions to inculturate marriage practices. There was a great deal of variation in the kinds of action people thought should be taken to inculturate marriage practices. The proposed actions were determined by the respondents' perceptions emanating from their cultural background and experiences. Someone from a cultural background familiar with African traditional culture would appreciate pre-modern culture in the running of the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. Some cultural practices were adopted because of the occupational context of the respondents. A pastor would view inculturation of marriage rituals differently from a deacon. Even the level of education they had, which enlightened their minds so that they could appreciate pre-modern culture in the Convention determined that. They could appreciate African traditional cultural practices in the churches.

Table 4.11 in the previous chapter shows that 32 (30.2%) of the total respondents thought that the NBC of Zimbabwe accepted some aspects of the Shona and Ndebele cultures in order to preserve the cultures. That is why they wanted to maintain the practices of African traditional culture in the running of the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. In this case, 17 (16.0%) of the Shona and 15 (14.2%) of the Ndebele respondents held that view. This was done because the NBC of Zimbabwe operates within Shona and Ndebele cultures. Therefore, the African culture was considered in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies as a way of keeping cultures so that the believers would feel that their cultural traditions are not ignored. From that, I concluded that the NBC of Zimbabwe does not destroy the Shona and Ndebele cultures in the running of marriage rituals to keep the culture of the believers.

³³ A statement on the same sex marriage issue, Voting and Christian responsibility. National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. June 2012

From my observations at church C (15th of January 2017) in Matabeleland I established that some of the members felt that aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture were adopted since they are rich in moral teaching.

Table 4.11 also shows that a total of 19 (17.9%) were of the opinion that Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were adopted as a way of avoiding misunderstanding about the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies. It actually helps in dealing with conflicts among believers. Ten (9.4%) of the Shona and nine (8.5%) of the Ndebele respondents consented to the NBC of Zimbabwe's adoption of some of the cultural practices as a way of preventing disputes in the church. Table 4.11 also shows that, the Shona and the Ndebele respondents thought that some of the cultural practices were adopted in the NBC of Zimbabwe ceremonies because of parents' desires, thus preventing disputes with the parents of the couple getting married.

Together with this, the Shona and Ndebele believers at church D on the 13th of November 2016 showed that in the conduct of a wedding ceremony not all families were Christians or were from the NBC of Zimbabwe. As result of that, the marriage ceremony had to follow their cultural practices since they were playing a vital role.

Interviews with Shona and Ndebele people on the 14th of November 2016 at the above church showed that the bride and the groom needed authorisation from their parents. According to Elder D2 and Deacon D3 the couple that wedded on the 13th of November 2016 sought the go-ahead from the parents so that they could wed. Pastor B1 had to abide by the requirements of the couple's parents and relatives. Thus, some of the cultural practices like the payment of lobola were incorporated into the NBC of Zimbabwe ceremony because of the desires of the parents and relatives.

Observations in January 2017 at C, E and F churches in Bulawayo in the Matabeleland region showed that when marriage ceremonies were conducted conflicts would normally arise between the church and family members or among family members. People fought if their cultural practices were discarded during marriage activities. Some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were therefore incorporated in the NBC of Zimbabwe as a way of resolving conflicts when there were cultural differences. Hence, the blending helps in resolving the clashes within the NBC of Zimbabwe wedding ceremonies.

Table 4.11 in chapter 4 shows that 27 (25.5%) of the respondents thought that Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were incorporated into marriage rituals because they were biblically commendable. Sixteen (15.1%) of the Shona and 11 (10.4%) of the Ndebele respondents thought that the NBC of Zimbabwe adopted Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in their marriage ceremonies because some of them were biblically commendable. Elder B2 from Bulawayo (Interview 5, 17 December 2016) reported a number of verses from the Bible that support the payment of lobola. Genesis 34:12 was cited as an example. This was due to the cultural background of the respondents. These respondents had a Christian background, which advocates the upholding of the Christian values. Where one could be seeing the importance of the phenomena of inculturation, one could be seeing something different if one believes in African traditional culture.

Table 4.11 shows that 9 (8.5%) thought that the NBC of Zimbabwe incorporated the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices so that the members would not feel out of place in the marriage rituals. Five (4.7%) of the Shona and 4 (3.8%) of the Ndebele respondents thought that the NBC of Zimbabwe adopted some of the cultural practices so that the Shona and Ndebele believers would feel at home in the churches of the Convention.

Interviews at church D on 14 November 2016 confirmed this. It was said that some NBC of Zimbabwe members who felt that some of their cultural practices were being attacked ended up observing those cultural practices in privacy. For instance, some Shona and Ndebele believers committed a bride to the ancestral spirits privately when she was going to the in-laws. That could not be done in public since the NBC of Zimbabwe strongly preached against it.

As Soosamariam (2006:1) points out, in the process of transmitting the Good News, evangelisation must purify culture. Therefore, cultural elements must be reflected. It is prudent that in the inculturation of the Gospel message, its meanings and values must be declared to the hearers using their own cultural symbols and language to enable them to feel at home in their own culture and be excited about sharing in the mission of the Universal Church (the church universal).

In my view, the cultural environment one grew up in determines one's responses. For instance, those who perceived aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture in the running of the NBC marriage rituals were likely to have grown up in such a cultural environment. On the other hand, someone not brought up in such a cultural set up would not value such aspects. One's cultural background

determines how one views issues. Those brought up in an environment permeated by Shona and Ndebele culture would value aspects of that culture even when they are born again Christians.

The educational level and the occupational context also determined people's response to inculturation. A respondent whose mind had been enlightened by education would view inculturation of marriage rituals differently from the one who is not. A respondent who was a pastor would perceive inculturation differently from an elder, deacon, National Executive Member or a lay member.

There were therefore various differing reasons for incorporating aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture into the marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe. Some of the reasons were that they wanted to maintain their culture, win people to Christ or keep in line with Christian biblical principles. Making believers feel at home was one of the reasons why Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were incorporated into the NBC of Zimbabwe. Respecting parents' desires was another reason. In the next section I shall address questions based on Kritzing's dimension of Reflexivity.

5.6 Dimension of Reflexivity

Sixthly, in the dimension of reflexivity, I have observed that there is a lot of reflection from leaders and members on the impact of the inculturation of marriage practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Numerous Shona and Ndebele marriage practices have been fused in the NBC of Zimbabwe. There are many possible benefits to the Convention members. The cultural backgrounds, occupational context and educational levels determined the varied perceptions of the respondents.

5.6.1 Cultural practices fused in the NBC of Zimbabwe churches

On the research question, "What are some of the aspects of the Shona and Ndebele cultures that have been fused in the NBC of Zimbabwe?" I noted that through the role of reflexivity several cultural practices have been adopted by the Convention congregations. The questionnaires, interviews and observation showed that the NBC of Zimbabwe has realised some aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture in the inculturation of marriage rituals though not fully.

In line with the role of reflexivity the NBC of Zimbabwe members were able to discern which Shona and Ndebele cultural practices could be used in the conduct of Convention's marriage ceremonies. Through discernment ecclesial authorities like pastors, elders, deacons, National Executive Members and church committee members could note that some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were in line with their Christian doctrines. Some cultural practices even

promoted moral uprightness within the Convention members. Behaviour of members could be moulded through some Shona and Ndebele cultural practices. From the questionnaires, interviews and observations described in chapter four, I established that the NBC of Zimbabwe encouraged the believers to marry from within the NBC of Zimbabwe to avoid clash of doctrines. The Convention encouraged members to marry a morally upright person. All this was done to promote a strong Christian foundation within the family, church, community and nation. Thus, in the inculturated marriage rituals the NBC of Zimbabwe urged members to marry praiseworthy Christians whose cultural background was known. The Convention took such a stance so that they would avoid clash of doctrines. Therefore, the NBC of Zimbabwe strongly encouraged members to marry within the NBC of Zimbabwe borrowing from the Shona and Ndebele cultures. As a result, the ecclesial authorities like pastors, elders, deacons and National Executive Members continuously preached and taught against marrying from outside the Convention, since this results in clash of doctrines.

In spite of this I observed that in January 2017 at church C one of the Shona young women was married to someone who did not belong to NBC of Zimbabwe. Some respondents said every person had a right to marry any person of his or her choice. In the NBC of Zimbabwe, therefore, some of the Shona believers followed a Shona proverb, which said *mwoyo muti unomera paunoda*. On the other hand, some of the Ndebele believers followed a proverb, which says, *umkhosi wehliziyo awuphalalelwa*. The two proverbs emphasize the fact that one can love any person of his/ her own choice. These proverbs show that the NBC of Zimbabwe members had the freedom to do whatever they felt like doing in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage issues. Thus, one can say encouraging Convention members to marry from within was a bit controversial within the NBC of Zimbabwe. The fact that the Convention members could do whatever they felt like doing regarding marrying someone whose background was known showed that there had been little or no reflection on such issues.

Through the role of reflexivity guidance and counselling in the Shona and Ndebele cultures have been adopted within the NBC of Zimbabwe. Table 4.10 in chapter shows that 29 (27.4%) of the respondents were of the opinion that the NBC of Zimbabwe has adopted the notion of guidance and counselling. In this case, 15 (14.2%) of the Shona respondents and 14 (13.2%) of the Ndebele respondents showed that the NBC of Zimbabwe adopted the concept of guidance and counselling from the Shona and Ndebele cultures. The youths, men and women received a lot of guidance and counselling during church services, conferences and organised meetings. The brides-to-be and

grooms-to-be received guidance and counselling during the bridal parties and bachelor's parties. Those in marriages received it from pastors, elders and deacons within the NBC of Zimbabwe. The pastor, elders and even deacons within the NBC of Zimbabwe, were now complementing the roles of the aunts and uncles in the Shona and Ndebele culture. A number of interview and observation results that I got in January 2017 supported this. Thus, the Convention had realised that guidance and counselling oiled the smooth running of marriages.

I have also noted that the consent of the parents/guardian was another concept, which had been incorporated into NBC of Zimbabwe. The issue of parents' consent is discussed by Prom (2013:112) in relation to the Gambian Methodist church in West Africa. In the Gambian Methodist Church, the marriage rite of passage has been left mostly in the hands of the family and relatives. In the same way the parents of the bride and groom play a leading role in the NBC of Zimbabwe, a practice that is found within the Shona and Ndebele cultures.

Ululating, dancing, clapping of hands and giving of gifts in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies had been adopted from the Shona and Ndebele cultures. This was confirmed by most of the observations I made. During the NBC of Zimbabwe wedding ceremonies, there was a lot of ululation, dancing and giving of gifts. A lot of ululation was done when the bride was getting to the in-laws for the first time. Something similar happens in the Roman Catholic Church in Kenya, where singing, dancing, the clapping of hands and the beating of drums in the liturgy was evidence of a new awareness toward accepting African customs in the church (Magesa 2004:10).

Most of the interview and observation results showed that in the Shona culture, when a bride was sent off for marriage, she was given gifts like mortar (*duri*), a sleeping mat(*rupasa*) and a sweeping broom (*mutsvairo*). She was also given some kitchen utensils such as plates (*ndiro*), pots(*mapoto*) and many other items, to use in a new home. In Ndebele culture the bride was given a sleeping mat (*ixansi*), a harvesting basket (*ingcebethu*), and sweeping broom (*umthanyelo*). This custom was borrowed by the NBC of Zimbabwe members when they conducted bridal showers for the bride. Such items were also given during the NBC of Zimbabwe wedding ceremonies. A lot of dancing was done as part of celebrations. The NBC of Zimbabwe had therefore adopted the customs of ululating, dancing and offering of gifts as part of its marriage rituals. All these enabled Convention members to feel at home in the NBC of Zimbabwe, since this was part of their African cultural practices.

Some elements, however, had not been incorporated. These are the invocation of ancestral spirits and the use of oppressive and expensive cultural practices in connection with marriage rituals. Charging exorbitant bride prices is discouraged. The use of herbs was also not encouraged. In line with the role of reflexivity, the Convention members discerned which Shona and Ndebele cultural practices to incorporate and which to omit. This was caused by the fact that members uphold that it was something against their Christian doctrine of an Almighty God, who is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient as well. Thus, not all the traditional Shona and Ndebele cultural practices had been incorporated into the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

In the preceding paragraphs I pointed out that through the role of reflexivity the Convention members could discern which Shona and Ndebele cultural practices could be incorporated or which ones to be omitted in the running of the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies. On the incorporation of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices, in the NBC of Zimbabwe a certain group of members, supported African traditional culture of the Shona and Ndebele people. The members advocated for the payment of bride price, ululating, dancing, clapping of hands and giving of gifts. The consent of the parents, guidance and counselling were some of the aspects of local culture that were adopted. This shows that this group of respondents supported the pre-modern culture in the NBC of Zimbabwe. In addition to this, they supported the rural cultural life as compared to the urban life. This was promoted by the fact that they were highly educated as such; they could appreciate even African traditional culture in the running of NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. Their long experience in the NBC of Zimbabwe contributed to the information they supplied. Having observed that, in the next section I discuss the possible benefits to the Convention members.

5.6.2 Possible benefits to the Convention members

On the research question, “Which are the possible benefits of these practices to the Convention members?” one benefit was that this resulted in winning more believers to Christ. Table 4.12 shows that a total of 32 (30.1%) of the respondents thought that one of the possible benefits of blending aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture with those of the NBC of Zimbabwe was that of winning believers to Christ. Twenty (18.9%) of the Shona respondents and 12 (11.3%) of the Ndebele respondents thought that one of the possible benefits was to bring unbelievers to Christ. Thus, inculturation encourages more people to join the NBC of Zimbabwe. Some of the interviews also indicated this. For instance, Pastor A1 (Interview 7, 8 December 2016) in Midlands region

confirmed this. Church committee member A4 also supported this view (Interview 8, 8 December 2016). Thus, blending cultures creates an opportunity for evangelism and soul winning.

The building of long lasting marriages within the Convention was one of the benefits as well. Table 4.12 shows that 24 (22.6%) indicated that blending results in long-lasting marriages in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Ten (9.4%) of the Shona respondents and 14 (13.2%) of the Ndebele respondents thought that the combination produced long-lasting marriages. Long-lasting marriages were created because the new couple got a lot of encouragement from the families. Thus, the blending had a possible benefit of establishing strong marriages, which created a strong church, a strong community and a strong Zimbabwean nation.

Another possible benefit was having one combined wedding ceremony. The NBC of Zimbabwe did not respect the Shona and Ndebele customary marriages, which then resulted in having two marriage ceremonies for the same couple. Having two ceremonies became a burden to the bride, the groom and relatives. Inculturation solve the problem by having one combined wedding ceremony. Table 4.12, shows that six (5.7%) of the respondents thought that one combined wedding ceremony was for the benefit of the unification of NBC of Zimbabwe with Shona and Ndebele cultural marriage customs. Most of the observations and interview results I got from C, D and E churches confirmed this. It was shown that anyone who had been married through a traditional wedding ceremony was expected to wed again in the church. This was because the NBC of Zimbabwe valued greatly a wedding ceremony conducted in the church. The blending of the cultural customs with the church rites solved this problem.

Okonkwo (2010:1) also found that inculturation was the response to the problem of conducting two weddings, as does Linus (2014). Linus observed that marriage is one celebration that has established a very severe and challenging pastoral condition for evangelisation and pastoral office. The situation brought about a battle between the traditional marriage festival and the church wedding. This clearly showed the need for inculturated Christian marriage preparation and celebration.

The incorporation of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices into the NBC of Zimbabwe resulted in the cultivation of good morals in the Convention. This created strong relationships in the Convention and the individual member churches. Such relationships were made through uniting families. It also built strong ties and strong relations between the families and the church. Thus inculturation of the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals had a number of benefits. Several

questionnaires, observations and interviews supported this. Table 4.12 shows that 13 (12.3%) of the respondents strongly emphasised the idea that inculturation results in the cultivation of good morals. Pastor C1 (Interview 9, 15 January 2017) at church C confirmed that inculturation promotes good morals among the youth, since they will emulate what the bride and the groom will have done.

The possible benefits of inculturating the Shona and Ndebele cultures within the NBC of Zimbabwe were influenced by the cultural background, educational and even the occupational context of the respondents. Thus, the respondents could provide logical and well-founded decisions on the possible benefits of the inculturation process of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe. Because of such factors the respondents could perceive the inculturation of marriage rituals from an informed position. They could provide sound reasons on the possible benefits of the inculturation of the Convention's marriage rituals. Some of the possible benefits included the aspect of winning more believers to Christ, long lasting marriages, one combined ceremony and cultivation of good morals within youths and couples within the Convention. In the next section I discuss the research questions in relation to Kritzinger's dimension of spirituality (Banda 2010:128)

5.7 Dimension of Spirituality

On the research question: What type of spirituality among the leaders and members underscores the inculturation of marriage ritual practices? I noted that the respondents had two different positions. From the questionnaires, observations and interviews results it was clear that the majority of leaders and members thought that the inculturation of marriage rituals should be promoted in the church, whilst a few thought that they should not be promoted at all.

Table 5:4 Age distribution of respondents on perceptions of the promotion of cultural rituals (N=106)

Age distribution on promotion of cultural rituals	YES		NO		GRAND TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
20-29	6	5.7	1	0.9	7	6.6
30-39	29	27.4	2	1.9	31	29.2
40-49	41	38.7	2	1.9	43	40.6
50-59	16	15.1	1	0.9	17	16.0
60-69	8	7.5	0	0	8	7.5
70-79	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	94.3	6	5.7	106	100

Table 5.4 shows that 100 (94.3%) of all the age groups agreed that the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices should be inculturated in the NBC of Zimbabwe. On the other hand, six (5.7%) thought that the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices should not be inculturated in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Thus, the majority of all the age groups agreed that there should be inculturation of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. The above data shows that most of the respondents were in the 40-49 years' age group and that a greater proportion of those over 40 approved of inculturation. While most of those under 40 also approved, a higher proportion of the under 40 group disapproved.

Most of the observation results supported the inculturation of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. The majority of the results I got from all the six assemblies: A, B, C, D, E and F churches from November 2016 to January 2017 confirmed this. The bulk of the Shona and Ndebele participants agreed that only practices that were in line with the Bible should be promoted, whilst those that were not should not be promoted. Anything against the Christian Bible was to be discarded. This group revealed that such rituals should be promoted because that helped in producing an authentic African church which also preserved Shona and Ndebele cultural practices.

The bulk of the observation results also showed that some cultural aspects preserve *Ubuntu*. As such, there was a great need for them to be inculturated in the running of the NBC of Zimbabwe

marriage rituals. For example, the initiation rituals played a significant role of guiding and counselling people. This also helped in reducing the rate of divorce in the church, community and nation. Furthermore, cultural practices were to be promoted because they are full of good morals and full of respect. Some cultural aspects preserve *Ubuntu / unhu/ vumunhu*. Therefore, there was a need for them to be accepted. In terms of spirituality, Convention doctrine encourages good moral values which translate to *Ubuntu/unhu/vumunhu*. Inculturation promotes the fact that people marry in a respectable manner. Through that *Ubuntu/unhu/vumunhu* is promoted in marriage issues since the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices will be taken into consideration. Therefore, this helped in lessening the rate of divorce in the church, community and nation.

National Executive members NEM1 and NEM2 agreed with this. National Executive member NEM2 concurred with the above response saying, “The Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects should be promoted since they enable the Shona and western culture to co-exist and even enable the Shona and Ndebele not to lose their culture”. The views of the National Executive members were supported by the majority of interviewees like A1, A4, B1, B2, C1, C2, D2, D3 and E3 as well. Thus, the majority of the interviewees were in support of the inculturation of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

However, a few of interview results indicated that the inculturation of marriage rituals should not be done since some of the cultural aspects were not biblical. For instance, some members could apply the aspect of ancestor veneration, since no one would be able to monitor such activities even at homes. A green light to inculturation may result in syncretism being practised in the NBC of Zimbabwe. As such, the essence of the Christian gospel may finally be lost. More so, the NBC of Zimbabwe may end up losing her Christian taste. To make matters worse, it would be difficult at the end to draw a line between Christianity and Shona and Ndebele cultures, since the two would have been combined into each other.

In addition to that, few of the interview results showed that this group was strongly against anything with Shona and Ndebele culture in it. They thought Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects were demonic and satanic in nature. Some of these respondents noted that some of the cultural aspects were expensive and oppressive at the same time. For instance, National Executive members NEM3 (Interview 13, 23 January 2017) pointed out that the Shona rituals in line with payment of lobola should be done away with. That group also pointed out that there were certain Shona families who demanded too much money or cattle if the brides were highly educated. Thus,

the group did not buy the idea of promoting the Shona and Ndebele cultural rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage.

More so, some interviewees resisted the inclusion since that could cause serious divisions in the church. Moreover, this could deter some prospective members from joining the NBC of Zimbabwe since they would be thinking that the members were not genuine Christians. Moreover, the interview results from some assemblies showed the NBC of Zimbabwe may end up losing her Christian flavour. In terms of spirituality, those in favour of inculturation of the marriage rituals thought that fusing cultural practices would make the Convention doctrine all encompassing, while those against thought that would water down the NBC of Zimbabwe doctrines. It would be difficult at the end to draw a line between Christianity and the Shona and Ndebele cultures, since the two would have been fused into each other.

In the NBC of Zimbabwe there were therefore two categories of people. There was a group made up of a majority of members who strongly supported pre-modern culture instead of the modern culture. They supported the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. They thought that African traditional cultural practices that were biblical should be adopted in the Convention. They did not support what was oppressive and expensive. On the other hand, there was a group, which strongly supported modern culture. That group did not support the inculturation of the marriage rituals since some African traditional cultural practices were not biblical. Some of the cultural practices were regarded to be too archaic, primitive and oppressive.

In the NBC of Zimbabwe there was a group which supported a rural kind of culture as opposed to urban culture since that group advocated for the cultural practices that seemed to be in favour of the rural culture. These included the payment of lobola, the conduct of the *kusungira* ritual and *ukuyavela*. The controversies surrounding the *kusungira* ritual and conduct of marriage rituals in November were some of the issues as well.

The perceptions on whether the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices should be adopted in the NBC of Zimbabwe were also determined by the educational level of the respondents. One who was highly educated was enlightened to the extent that he or she was able to appreciate the use of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the running of the NBC of Zimbabwe.

The Shona and Ndebele respondents therefore had mixed feelings on the promotion of Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects in the running of NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. Most of them

thought that those practices that were in line with the bible could be incorporated. This group also thought that practices that were not biblical should not be incorporated. A minority was strongly against the promotion of any aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture in the NBC at all. This group pointed out that some of the cultural practices were not biblical and would cause a clash of doctrines. Some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were expensive and oppressive. They pointed out that it might cause conflicts within the NBC of Zimbabwe, since there were some other ethnic tribes like the Sotho, Tonga, Venda and the Kalanga whose cultures would not be incorporated.

In the preceding paragraphs, I have discussed the type of spirituality that accentuates the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in line with Kritzinger's dimension of Spirituality (Banda 2010:128). This shows that spirituality played a significant role in as far as the inculturation of marriage rituals in the Convention was concerned.

5.8 Summary

This chapter delineated the findings of this research study on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe within the framework of Kritzinger's seven dimensions of the praxis matrix, namely 1) Agency, 2) Contextual understanding, 3) Ecclesial scrutiny, 4) Biblical tradition, 5) Discernment for action: 6) Reflexivity, and 7) Spirituality. I have shown that the kind of inculturation that could help facilitate greater engagement of inculturation between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona as well as Ndebele cultures is varied. I have discussed the possible benefits of adopting these cultural practices, the limitations, and the perceptions of respondents on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. I have established that the varied results I got were a result of the cultural background and the experiences the respondents had. For instance, some were brought in a cultural setup, which promoted Shona and Ndebele cultural practices and others were not. Those with a Christian background would perceive it from a different perspective. The next chapter focuses on the Missiological discourse vis a-vis marriage rituals in the context of the NBC of Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 6: MISSIOLOGICAL DISCOURSE OF MARRIAGE RITUALS IN THE CONTEXT OF NBC OF ZIMBABWE

6.0 Introduction

In this chapter 6, I examine the relevant missiological discourse. This chapter fits quite well in the phase 4 of the Praxis Cycle that is on planning for action or missiological strategies. I advance further the missiological discourse which includes the definition of terms pertinent to this discourse namely missiology, culture and inculturation. I also analyse the term inculturation distinguishing it from enculturation. I also consider the lenses I used to look at the various issues / questions raised in the discussion. I attempt to answer the following questions. Am I Pentecostal? Am I conservative, when reading the bible? Do I have the spectacles of an African Theologian?

6.1 Definition of concepts pertinent to the discourse

6.1.1 Missiology

Scholars have attempted to define Missiology in numerous ways. According to Van Schalkwyk (2010:39), Missiology is “A critical reflection on the nature and the movement of God’s mission in the world; and a critical but pro-active reflection on the church’s participation in this movement towards the realisation of SHALOM; as this relates to mission endeavours-AND as this relates to the agents of God’s movement”. In brief, one can as well view it as a study of the church’s participation in God’s movement in the world. Furthermore, Missiology³⁴ refers to an interdisciplinary “field” of study. Ivan Illich defines Missiology in a poetic language. He says Missiology is, “The science about the word of God, as the church in her becoming; the church as a surprise and a puzzle; the church in her growth; the church when her historical appearance is one that she has to strain herself to recognize her past in the mirror of the present” (Bosch 1991:493). It is the academic discipline that researches, records and applies data relating to the biblical source, the history and the anthropological principles. In fact, numerous disciplines including theology, anthropology, economics, and linguistics contribute insights to missiology researches, records and applies data relating to the biblical source, the history and the anthropological principles within the NBC of Zimbabwe. In fact, numerous disciplines including Theology, Anthropology, Economics, and Linguistics contribute insights to Missiology. It also encompasses the techniques

³⁴Charles and Marguerite Kraft cited by Tippet 1987: xix posit that some critiques have objected to the term Missiology because of its etymological basis of being half Latin and half Greek. For the two scholars the English word mission came into popular use in various ways in the 16th and 17th centuries- theological, ecclesiastical and political.

and the theological base for Christian mission among the Shona and Ndebele people of the Midlands and Matabeleland regions of Zimbabwe.

Missiology³⁵ also refers to multidisciplinary “field” of study. It is the intellectual discipline, which investigates, documents and applies data relating to the biblical source, the history and the anthropological principles. In fact, various disciplines like theological disciplines, Anthropology, and Economics and Linguistics also contribute insights to missiology. It even includes the techniques and the theological foundation for the Christian.

According to Tippet (1987: xii) the simplest definition of Missiology is, “The study of individuals being brought to God in history”. In this sense, if one investigates persons brought to God in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the past that would define how the term missiology is applied. However, Tippet went on to define Missiology as the educational discipline, or science, which researches, records and applies data relating to the biblical source and history. Even the use of documentary materials, the anthropological philosophy and techniques and the theological foundation for the Christian mission is covered (Tippet 1987: xii). This means Missiology is mainly concerned with the processes by which the Christian message is imparted and the encounters brought about by its proclamation to non-Christians. It also includes the planting of the church and organisation of congregations and the growth and significance of their structures and fellowship, within to maturity, outwardly in outreach as the body of Christ in local situations and beyond, in a multiplicity of culture patterns.

Missiology is an integrated totality, which is based on Jesus Christ and his mission. According to Engen (1994: 19), while Missiology is known to be an amalgamated discipline it is also a multi-disciplinary discipline³⁶. Thus, it draws from many areas of skills like biblical studies, church history, systematic theology, and cultural anthropology to mention but a few.

Missiology is therefore a multi-disciplinary branch of theology centred on Jesus Christ and his mission, which studies the mission of the Christian church (Bosch 1991: 493). Therefore, this may apply to the NBC of Zimbabwe, in all its aspects.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Luzbetak in his book *The church and cultures* says missiology is not a discipline but a field. This is because one has to know Linguistics, Anthropology, Economics, Communication science and many other things to do missiology as cited in Tutorial Letter 101/0/2014 Research in Missiology page 17

6.1.2 Culture

Many scholars have attempted to define the term culture. Shorter (1985:5) defines culture as a “transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a pattern capable of development and change and belongs to the concept of humaneness itself”. The gospel in this movement of inculturation therefore is meant to Christianise the dynamic culturally conveyed pattern of meanings that is symbolically personified. Because of this, missionaries are constantly attempting to incarnate the Evangel into their cross-cultural mission contexts with the knowledge that culture is open to improvement and modification. This development and alteration needs to be gradual and eventually owned by the receptor culture in order to strengthen the Christianisation of their culture. As such, the term culture in this study referred to the traditional values and practices of Shona and Ndebele people of Matabeleland and Midlands understudy.

Bronislaw Malinowski (in Niebuhr 2001:32)³⁷ defines the term culture as the “artificial secondary environment” which ‘man’ superimposes on the natural. It encompasses language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organisation, inherited artefacts, technical processes and values. In this study, “culture” therefore refers to the traditional values and practices of the Shona and Ndebele people of the NBC of Zimbabwe in Matabeleland and Midlands regions.

6.1.3 Inculturation

Several scholars, such as Anthony (2012), Panganiban (2004), Magesa (2004), Hlatshwayo (2000) and Crollius (1978) have explored the topic of inculturation. Most of the research on the topic focuses on inculturation in the Roman Catholic Church, and most of the research has been undertaken by members of the Roman Catholic Church. I tried to apply this to the missiology of inculturation within the NBC of Zimbabwe, especially in relation to marriage rituals.

6.1.3.1 The origin and nature of Inculturation

Scholars like Anthony (2012:237) believe that a historical analysis of the development of the church indicates that the notion of inculturation at the beginning of this century was relatively new in Missiology. Crollius thought that its appearance could initially be linked to the attempt to find a model whereby “the church becomes part of the culture of a people” (Bate 1994:1). Onwubiko (1997) said that inculturation is, “new vision of an old problem in the church or a new approach to

³⁷ Malinowski, Bronislaw, art, “Culture” *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Vol. IV, page 621.

a solution of an old problem” (Anthony 2012:237). Thus, a close analysis of church development shows that the concept of inculturation at the start of the century was fairly new in missiology.

Scholars have different views on the origin of the term inculturation. According to Anthony (2012), Metuh (1996) suggests that the concept was probably first applied in a theological sense by Joseph Masson, a professor of the Gregorian University of Rome. Panganiban (2004:61) says,

The term enculturation is supposed to have crossed over from the field of cultural anthropology to missiology through the work of Pierre Charles but inculturation appeared for the first time in the work of Joseph Masson, S.J. in 1962 when he coined the phrase ‘Catholicisme Inculture’ or Inculturated Catholicism.³⁸

Panganiban (2004:62) also noted that in 1974 the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) spoke of “a church indigenous and inculturated”. Pope Paul VI had already expressed the idea of inculturation without actually using the term on the tenth anniversary of *Ad Gentes*’ promulgation. Hlatshwayo (2000:101) notes that in 1974 the Catholic Bishops of Africa and Madagascar made a strong statement about the reality of the phenomenon of inculturation to the Synod on Evangelisation, but did not make much use of the term. This shows that even though they did not use the term much, they were aware of its existence.

Panganiban (2004:62) also says that in 1977 Father General Pedro Arrupe S.J. introduced the term to the Synod on Catechesis in Rome, but another source attributes the use of the term at the same Synod to Cardinal Sin of Manila. She further posited that the word was formed in Japan as a different version of acculturation. Crollius (1978) thought that the term’s origin was linked to Chupungco who suggested that the term was formed in 1973 by G.L. Barney, a Protestant missionary (Panganiban 2004:62). Scholars therefore have different ideas about the origin of the term “inculturation”.

John Paul’s *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979), which followed the Synod in Rome, marked the first appearance of the term in a Papal document (Panganiban 2004:62). On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the promulgation of *Ad Gentes*, the same pope promulgated *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) the document that is considered the *magnum opus* on inculturation. In the encyclical inculturation is defined as “...the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their insertion in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures...” (Panganiban 2004:62).

³⁸ Bosch (1991:447) concurs with Panganiban (2004:61) on the origin of the inculturation when he notes that it appeared for the first time in the work of Joseph Masson who first coined the term *Catholicisme in culture*’ (inculturated Catholicism).

The origin of the concept of inculturation has been viewed from a non-religious perspective. Metuh (1996) suggests that the word has been borrowed from cultural anthropology, where it refers to the process by which a person is inserted into his culture. This has been slightly changed in its missiological function where it is seen as a process by which the church becomes inserted into a particular culture (Anthony 2012:237). The term thus has a non-religious perspective and a changed missiological purpose as well. Therefore, the term inculturation that I focused on in this study, scholars have different opinions on its origin and nature. There are also other terms that are synonymous with inculturation.

6.1.3.2 Terms synonymous with inculturation

I would like to note that there are many articles and books on enculturation and acculturation but there are no clear and clean-cut differentiations between these terminologies so that one cannot say one is theological, spiritual or even social. This is thus a controversial issue.

Anthony (2012:238); Amadi (2008:8); Panganiban (2004:63); King (2000:101) and Shorter (1999:4) concur that there are certain concepts that seem to suggest similar meanings at practical level with inculturation but they are not. These terms seem to have definitions that overlap to a greater or lesser extent with inculturation.

6.1.3.2.1 Missionary adaptation or accommodation

According to King (2000:1) two terms were used to describe what is now known as inculturation in earlier writings. The words are “missionary adaptation” or “accommodation”. These terms did not last long in the system because they were seen to be having some shortcomings. Crollius (1995:111) said that these terms “.... express rather an extrinsic relationship between the Christian life and message and a given culture...” (King 2000:1).

6.1.3.2.2 Indigenisation

The other term that has also fallen out of favour is “indigenization”. This is a term which has also been used to express the reality of the relationship between the Christian Gospel and the indigenous cultures. According to Nzomiwu (1986: 323-334) “indigenisation is better described than defined”. This is caused by the fact that it is mostly concerned with a people’s cultural milieu. This means indigenisation endeavours to take very earnestly the traditional or native culture of a people. In an effort to define this concept Peter Schneller suggests that to be indigenous means to be native, one

who is born into a particular context or culture.³⁹ In theological cycle this word refers to one's relationship to their inheritance. King (2000:2) argues that indigenisation seems to share many of the weaknesses of contextualisation. The term contextualisation takes into account the changing nature of culture. Literally it means a "weaving together".⁴⁰ That is an interweaving of the Gospel with every specific situation. In this case, it means the intermingling of the NBC of Zimbabwe Christian Gospel with the particular situation of the Shona and Ndebele people in line with the inculturation of marriage rituals.

Theologians such as Justin S. Ukpong suggest that contextualisation is a manner and practice of connecting the Gospel message to the people's concrete life situation.⁴¹ It should be noted that contextualisation like indigenisation does not seem to do full justice to the reality of the correlation which should exist when Christianity comes into contact with the native culture. This means the terms indigenisation and contextualisation had limitations. In African Christian circles contextualisation and indigenisation were not accepted as appropriate terms. Therefore, it is my conclusion that such words fell out of favour because of their constraints.

6.1.3.2.3 Adaptation and accommodation

According to Hlatshwayo (2000:101) other terms like adaptation and accommodation were popular before Vatican II. All such terms were disregarded because of their limitations as well. Ukpong (1984:24) said that African Catholic writers had favoured the term incarnation. By that they meant "...immersing Christianity in African culture [so that], just as Jesus became man, so must Christianity become African..." (King 2000:2). Martey (1995:66) said that unfortunately for the African Roman Catholic writers the Vatican disapproved of it as well (King 2000:2). The term has not withstood the test of time.

According to Fabella (www.the.way.org.uk/back/39fabellapdf accessed on 05 August 2014) the term "inculturation" goes beyond adaptation, accommodation, or indigenisation, words which were employed in relation to preaching the gospel in non-western categories. Fabella says that while these make use of the native culture in some way the mutuality in the process is absent. For her some Asian theologians use incarnation or even indigenisation as synonyms for inculturation.

³⁹ Peter Schneller, *A Handbook of Inculturation*. New York Paulist Press page18

⁴⁰ Orlando E Costas, "Contextualization and incarnation" in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* no 29D 1979, page 23-30

⁴¹ Justin S. Ukpong, "Contextualization: A historical survey", in *African Ecclesial Review*.29 no 50, 1987, page 278-286.

6.1.3.2.4 Enculturation

According to Shorter (1999:5) another term which was also used is enculturation, sometimes spelt inculturation. Firstly, in one of the News letters written in *My Cultural Safari in Africa* Quinn (2009:2) says,

In this call for articles on Inculturation in Africa” the first shocker is that the word “inculturation” does not exist in the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*. The second shocker is that the computer sees it as a spelling mistake and offers another version spelled “enculturation” that is not in the dictionary either.

The author also wonders what it means. He even goes on to ask if a new term had been coined by the Catholic Church and missiologists. That term goes beyond the “acculturation” process that an individual pass through in learning the customs, beliefs, language and art of a particular society.

According to Rooms (2005:27) enculturation is socialisation. This process can be observed in children brought up within a culture to observe and obey its cultural and social norms. Such people would then find themselves as part of the culture when the course of action is complete.

Panganiban (2004:63) says that enculturation in cultural anthropology denotes an individual’s insertion into his or her culture. Crollius states that the notion has been analogously functional in missiology in the sense of the church’s insertion into a given culture. The term inculturation discusses this process. The difference between the two words is that in enculturation, the individual is assumed not to have a culture, and it is by means of this process that one can attain it. Concerning the Church, Panganiban (2004:63) says, however “though it (Church) is not bound to any particular culture (it) does not enter into a given culture unless already linked with the elements of another culture”.

The two words are different since enculturation is a sociological term, whilst inculturation has to be reserved for the theological situation. For Shorter (1999:5) enculturation is a sociological concept that has been used analogously by theologians for the theological notion of inculturation. To preserve the differences between the sociological and the theological uses of this word, it is therefore better to reserve the spelling enculturation for a sociological context and inculturation for the theological situation.

6.1.3.2.5 Acculturation

Acculturation has been closely linked with the theological concept of inculturation as seen by Panganiban (2004:63) and Shorter (1999:6). Panganiban (2004, 63) points out that this is also a term borrowed from cultural anthropology. The term denotes “the encounter between cultures”. In

this study, it referred to the encounter between the Christian culture of the NBC of Zimbabwe with the Ndebele and Shona traditional cultures. Acculturation is sometimes confused with inculturation, so that it becomes difficult to know whether writers think the two terms can be used interchangeably. Panganiban also points out that although acculturation is a necessary condition of inculturation it is a distinct sociological notion. For Shorter (1999:7), acculturation refers to the encounter between a given culture and another one or just an encounter between the cultures.

Rooms (2005:25) also supports Shorter (1999:7) when he defines acculturation as the process of two cultures coming together through which meeting both cultures are changed. For Rooms (2005:25), however, the process is often governed by power relations where the more authoritative culture determines the path of cultural change. Therefore, cultural change will always be the outcome of acculturation. Acculturation is therefore closely linked with the theological concept of inculturation.

6.1.3.2.6 Interculturation as a close relative of inculturation

Panganiban (2004:63) also posits that the term's close relative interculturation was created to highlight the two-way process involved when the Christian message which is already within a culture intermixes with another culture. The idea is that the Gospel and culture reciprocally transform of each other. Some would suggest interculturation as more suitable since the exchange between the gospel and culture is an exchange between two cultures. But it seems that scholars have different views of such a term.

6.1.3.2.7 Inculturation

Panganiban (2004:630) asserts that inculturation may have arisen as the commonly-used term in the Roman Catholic Church because alternative terms have been found to be inadequate. She notes that Schneller finds that the terms imposition, translation and adaptation lack the proper nuances in defining the associations between faith and culture. She then considers other terms more suitable such as indigenisation, contextualisation, incarnation and inculturation. She then quickly points out that the term indigenisation has a negative connotation in some languages, which was basis for its rejection in Catholic circles.

Panganiban (2004:63) sums up her views by pointing out that in a more comprehensive work, Bevans categorises current approaches to relating faith and culture into the following models namely translation, anthropological, praxis, synthetic, semiotic, transcendental and counter cultural. She then points out that one of the key strengths of this effort at structuring is that it

illuminates for us what methodological concerns are at stake in the process of developing a method to inculturation.

After considering terms that seem to be like inculturation I concluded that there are varieties of terms that seem to be like inculturation. Therefore, there were a number of terms related to inculturation and each was discarded for one reason or another. There are many articles and books on enculturation and acculturation. Sometimes there are no clear and clean-cut differentiations between these terminologies to be able to say whether one or the other is theological, spiritual or even social. It is a controversial issue. The Pan African Congress of Third World Theologians held in Accra agreed that most people seemed to be comfortable with the term, “inculturation”, so that is the one that I used in this study. I therefore examined the term inculturation as a theological concept in relation to the marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

6.2 Inculturation as a theological concept

I will now look at the theological concept of inculturation as seen by scholars like Anthony (2012:237); Magesa (2004:4) and Bate (1991:1-2) in order to determine the usefulness of inculturation as a theological concept for interpreting marriage rituals. Magesa (2004:5) sees inculturation, from a Christian theological perspective, as a process whereby the faith embodied in one culture encounters another “culture”. Pym (2011) points out that inculturation is the term authorised by Pope John Paul II from 1985 to describe the incarnation of the Gospel in autonomous cultures, and at the same time the introduction of these cultures into the life of the church. In this study, I regarded it as the way in which the Christian faith, interacted with the Shona and Ndebele cultures. It mixed with the new culture and simultaneously transformed it into a novel –cultural reality.

According to Crollius (1978:722) the word “inculturation” appeared during the period 1974-1981 when it was the subject of some theological enquiry particularly amongst Jesuits as a result of discussions on the role of culture in the church in the 32nd General congregation of the Society of Jesus. This investigation ended in an interdisciplinary seminar on inculturation in Jerusalem in 1981 and the emergence of the series of Working Papers on inculturation. Since then the subject has been taken up by Catholic missiologists throughout the world (Bate 1994:2).

The term “inculturation” also entered Protestant missionary discourse. As a result of that, inculturation “is today one of the mostly used concepts in missiological circles” (Bosch 1991:447).

The word inculturation therefore features in both Roman Catholic and Protestant missionary discourses. Therefore, the concept of inculturation formed part of the missiological discourse of the NBC of Zimbabwe since this Convention is part of the Protestant churches in Zimbabwe.

Cowden (2015) has a thesis titled “Liturgical inculturation among the Baptists in the United States”. According to him, liturgical inculturation seeks to cultivate worship that is meaningful in the church’s context by joining texts and rites with the cultural pattern surrounding the church. In his thesis, he commenced with a brief investigation of historical impacts on Baptist liturgical theology and music. After that, he then introduced the study of liturgical inculturation, describing principles and methods developed by Catholic and Protestant liturgists. For him these principles and methods serve as a basis for application of liturgical inculturation among Baptists in the United States. In his thesis music as a means of inculturation received particular consideration. He presents examples of liturgical inculturation among Baptists in the United States, demonstrating the pragmatism of inculturation for Baptists past and present.

The introduction of instruments into Baptist worship is another historic point of liturgical inculturation. The position of early Baptists in America was part of a long Christian heritage that rejected the use of instrumental music in worship. They gave many reasons, ranging from practical to theological, for refusing to allow instruments in their churches (Cowden 2015:103). No significant determination was made to present instruments until after 1800, and when they finally were brought in they usually were accompanied by disagreement. Congregants who opposed the use of instruments often made their opinions known by departing from the worship space during congregational singing and returning for the sermon. The bass viol was among the first instruments used to support singing in American Baptist worship. The First Baptist Church of Newport, Rhode Island, began using a bass viol just after the turn of the nineteenth century; the First Baptist Church of Providence followed suit in 1804; it was introduced in the First Baptist Church of Haverhill, Massachusetts, around 1810; and the First Baptist Church of Boston used one by 1818. The Baptists in the South and West were slower to introduce instruments to accompany congregational singing due to financial reasons as well as biblical and theological considerations. Few congregations in the South used a musical instrument before the 1830s. Acceptance of the bass viol was followed by the addition of other instruments to Baptist worship. Churches began using whatever instruments chanced to be available - which often included bass viols, clarinets, flutes, violins and brass instruments (Cowden 2015, 103).

Whether used by Roman Catholics the theological content of inculturation remains the same. Using this understanding of inculturation I examined the benefits for the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland Regions.

6.3 Benefits of inculturation

Scholars as Soosamariam (2006), Anthony (2012), and many others pointed out that inculturation has a number of benefits at international and national level. Just like what was noted by Soosamariam (2006), I observed from the interviews, observations and questionnaires results that the Shona and Ndebele people appreciated the NBC of Zimbabwe for giving a deep value to their Shona and Ndebele cultural practices and showing deepest respect for their religious traditions. Payment of bride price and marrying a person whose background is known (*Kuroorana vematongo*) were some of the cultural practices which were incorporated into the Convention. Such cultural practices promoted indissolubility of marriage. Soosamariam (2006: 1) says that in Malaysia people spontaneously use familiar symbolic expressions or rituals in marriage and funeral celebrations since Malaysia is composed of people of Indian, Chinese and Malay heritage. For instance, never does an Indian Catholic marriage take place without a *thali* because this tradition has been incorporated into the Catholic liturgy, which is a clear example of inculturation. Because most Catholic Christians are converts from Indian and Chinese religions one cannot just talk about one Malaysian culture.

Similar to what was indicated by Anthony (2012:242) where Mass rituals were inculturated, I found out that the NBC of Zimbabwe churches have also incorporated some of the Shona and Ndebele marriage cultural rituals. The *kusungira* and the *ukucola* rituals were some of the rituals which were incorporated into the Convention in line with the inculturation of the marriage rituals. Although such rituals have been incorporated I have established that they were a bit controversial. Some respondents thought the rituals were to be held in the Convention whilst the other group was against that. Most of the responses were influenced by many factors like cultural and educational background. The existence of inculturation in NBC of Zimbabwe confirmed by what was put forward by Anthony (2012:242) who stated that the church in Africa has gone far in the practice of inculturation. For instance, in Mass in the Catholic Church in Ethiopia there is an Ethiopian rite, which is already in existence. In Zaire, there is the Zairean rite, which addresses to the people's religious categories. In Nigeria, however, the proposed rite is still at proposal level and not used in practice. Thus, the Convention like the Catholic Church had inculturated her marriage rituals.

From the questionnaires, observations and interview results I established that singing, dancing, the clapping of hands and the beating of drums were some benefits of inculturating marriage rituals in the Convention. Such cultural practices were evident in the NBC of Zimbabwe wedding ceremonies. Elements of singing, dancing, the clapping of hands and the beating of drums were quite observable. Such benefits have been noted in the Roman Catholic Church in Kenya. Elements such as singing, dancing, the clapping of hands and the beating of drums in the liturgy are evidence of a new awareness and acceptance of African customs in the church (Magesa 2004:10). In Africa vernacular language is also applied among the African Christian worshipping communities. African art has been employed in the liturgy and decorating places of worship (Anthony 2012: 242). Such cultural practices have been incorporated in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. So the members felt at home in the running of Convention marriage rituals.

What was observed by Magesa (2004:10) concurs with what was raised by respondents in my study. Magesa (2004:10) asserted that in Kenya one group of respondents pointed out that there was increased emphasis on chastity before marriage in Christian preaching. In the NBC of Zimbabwe, I noted that there was a strong emphasis on chastity before marriage in the preaching and teaching. The pastors, elders, deacons and youth advisors encouraged the young men and young women to observe chastity. Even a married husband or married wife was encouraged to observe fidelity. Anyone who failed to observe chastity was put under disciplinary action by the church leadership. All this promoted good moral values in the Convention. In the Convention churches, there was even a lot of involvement of parents and other elders in the marriage process of their children like what was noted by Magesa (2004). Hence, there was active participation of members in marriage activities. For the NBC of Zimbabwe officials like the Catholic officials this was an indication that African values in these issues are being taken seriously by the church.

Having assessed such benefits of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe, in the next section I scrutinise the motivation of inculturating marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

6.4 Motivation for inculturation

Inculturation at church, national, and even at international levels was driven by a number of forces. I discussed some of the causes propounded by some respondents as the driving forces of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the Convention. I did this to determine the motivation for the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Doyle (2012), Soosamariam (2006),

Magesa (2004) and others, believe that numerous factors cause inculturation in Africa and in the world in general. The fundamental duty of the church was to spread kingdom principles, for the church exists in order to evangelise and to be evangelised.

In this study, I have established that just like what was observed by Soosamariam (2006:1) in Malaysia⁴², the NBC of Zimbabwe's evangelisation purified the culture of the Shona and Ndebele people in Matabeleland and Midlands regions. Soosamariam was writing about Malaysia, which is composed of people who are of Indian, Chinese and Malay heritage. Soosamariam (2006:1) delineated some of the origins of inculturation in Malaysia. The NBC of Zimbabwe did what was done in Malaysia in the process of transmitting the gospel to the Shona and Ndebele people. Some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural aspects like payment of the bride price (*lobola/roora*) and marrying a person whose background was known were reflected in the inculturation of the marriage rituals. The Convention declared the meanings and values of the Gospel message to Shona and Ndebele people using their cultural symbols and language. All this was done so that the Shona and Ndebele people would feel at home in the Convention since their own culture was incorporated. They became excited about sharing in the mission of the Universal Church.

Magesa (2004:10), in his research on the Catholic Church in Kenya, pointed out that the Catholic officials cited cultural awareness and pride on the one hand and Christianity's potential contribution to the growth of African culture on the other, as one of the reasons for inculturation. For him, the African Christians in Kenya identify extremely with the Christian church, and treat the church as their own, rather than as a foreign organisation, it ought to be deep-seated in the local cultures, taking into itself the people's customs and ways of doing things. Like what was observed by Magesa (2004:10), I noted from questionnaires, interviews and observation results that for the Shona and Ndebele Christians to be able to treat the NBC of Zimbabwe as their own and not as foreign, the Convention had to be deep rooted in the Shona and Ndebele cultures in Matabeleland and Midlands regions. Thus, the Convention incorporated the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices in the inculturation of marriage rituals for the believers to appreciate the Gospel of Jesus being preached. That caused the Convention members to feel accommodated.

⁴² Stanislaus Soosamariam is a Malaysian diocesan priest from Kuala Lumpur. He currently ministers in a multi-cultural parish in Kuala Lumpur where he organises Basic Christian Communities (BCC) and makes use of opportunities to assimilate cross-cultural symbols into his parish.

Through the inculturation of marriage rituals a rich ground for including various marriage rituals of the Ndebele and Shona cultures in the activities of the church were promoted. This is in line with what was pointed by Anthony (2012:236) who said that the other basic reason of inculturation in Africa is the provision of a rich ground for integrating the culture of a particular people in the life of the church. Therefore, many factors promoted inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe churches of Matabeleland and Midlands regions.

6.5 Barriers to inculturation

I am going to examine the constraints on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Shona and Ndebele cultures as outlined by the respondents. Such kind of obstacles to inculturation have also been highlighted by scholars like Anthony (2012), Kurgat (2009), Pruitt (2007) and Magesa (2004, 10). Nathaniel (1994) said unless these stumbling blocks are removed “Africa is likely to disappoint not only her sons and daughters, but also the entire universal church for her inability to take the initiative and make good of the Africa’s finest hour...” (Anthony 2012:242).

Pruitt (2007) pointed out that one of the constraints to inculturation in Africa and the world in general is fear of syncretism⁴³. Such a constraint was also highlighted by some of the respondents in the NBC of Zimbabwe. That limitation greatly affected the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. “The chief concern levelled at the advocacy of the inculturation process is the perceived danger of syncretism...” (Pruitt 2007:23). In this study syncretism was observed when Christianity clothed with Jewish culture was combined with Ndebele and Shona culture in Midlands and Matabeleland regions. Anthony (2012) pointed out that a number of ordained priests, men and women as well as the lay people are afraid of the fact that what is called inculturation may turn out to be another kind of what fetish priests, witchdoctors and fortune tellers practise in African traditional culture. It is my conclusion that NBC of Zimbabwe congregants regarded the practice of inculturation of marriage rituals in the church a sign of fetishism in Africa. What was noted by Anthony (2012) was also evident from the responses from the interviewees in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Fear of fetishism in the form of *chikwambo* was noted to be one of the constraints of inculturating NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. For instance, among the Shona people a bride brings a *chinu* which she keeps at the groom’s home for the rest of her life. When she passes on her maiden family demands of that *chinu* (calabash for storing unguent) from the groom’s family.

⁴³ Helmer Ringgren (1996) defined syncretism as any mixture of two or more religions (Pruitt 2007:23)

At times people may think it is a normal *chinu* when in fact the bride is bringing *chikwambo* (harmful object) into the home.

The Convention respondents pointed out that one of the constraints that hindered inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe was distrust for things African. Such a challenge had been alluded to by Anthony (2012:243). Anthony pointed out that distrust for things African has been seen as a challenge to the implementation of inculturation. The above scholar indicated that numerous Africans seem to have fear and shame of being Africans. The slave trade and later colonialism by the Whites made the Blacks believe that the Westerners were a superior race. In the drama book, *I will marry when I want*, by Ngugi wa Thiongo and Ngugi wa Mirii a couple is coerced to wed in church because their African marriage was regarded as cohabiting and pagan. This constraint was evident from the questionnaires and interview results I gathered in the study. Respondents indicated that anyone who was married in a traditional manner was supposed to wed in the NBC of Zimbabwe churches. More constraints were realised when the couple had to buy attire for the wedding, food and pay transport costs. Therefore, distrust for things African has been a challenge to the implementation of inculturation of marriage rituals in the Convention in Matabeleland and Midlands regions.

Kurgat (2009:95) wrote a full-length research paper on the theology of inculturation and the African church and found that when Christianity was introduced in the Busia District, African marriage practices were rejected as being irreconcilable with those of the Christian notion of marriage. These included polygamy, sororate and levirate marriage. Kurgat (2009:95) quotes Kanyadago (1991) as saying "... however the African episcopate raised a number of wide ranging issues among which are those regarding giving due recognition to the values of African customary forms of marriage; and recommending that the church adapt itself to African cultural contexts". It is my opinion that African marriage practices were turned down since they were perceived to be not in line with the Christian view of marriages.

The study showed that the NBC of Zimbabwe churches did not condone polygamy raised by Kurgat (2009:95). In fact, the constitution of the Convention stipulates that a husband should be married to one wife. This means polygamy is not allowed in the Convention even though it is biblical. In the Bible renowned characters like Abraham and Solomon were polygamists. From the responses I noted that sororate is not allowed in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. Sororate marriage is defined as a kind of marriage of one man to two or more sisters usually

successively and after the first wife has been found to be barren or after her death (<https://www.merriam-webster.com> accessed 18-11-18.) The fact that a man marries two or more sisters makes this marriage ritual not to be accepted in the Convention since the constitution encourages monogamy. The responses also did not support levirate marriage. Levirate marriage is a forced marriage of a widow to the brother of her deceased husband (<https://www.merriam-webster.com> accessed 18-11-18). One is supposed to marry a person of her own choice. Therefore, such kind of marriage rituals were noted to be constraints to the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe since some members privately practised such marriage rituals. Therefore, such African marriage practices were turned down since they were perceived to be not in line with the Christian view of marriages.

One of the factors that hindered inculturation was that some feared that the truth of their tradition will be lost or corrupted (King 2000:1). Like what was observed by King (2001) some of the NBC of Zimbabwe Christians were afraid of the fact that the truth of the Christian tradition may be lost. The Shona and Ndebele people thought that their tradition of performing *ukucola*, *ukuvela* and payment of bride price would be lost again. It is my conclusion that fears of the fact that the Shona and Ndebele tradition would be lost was one of the limitations to the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe of Matabeleland and Midlands regions.

The NBC of Zimbabwe members thought that another constraint to the inculturation of the marriage rituals was that there could be fighting in the Convention to such attempts. In this case one group was supporting the inculturation of marriage rituals whilst the other one was not. King (2000:1) says that inculturation can be perceived as a corruption of the faith, and highlights that such attitudes are far removed from those of the practitioners. The view raised by King (2000:1) has proven to be one of the constraints of inculturating marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in Matabeleland and Midlands regions. In fact, some National Executive Members, pastors, elders, deacon and church committee members pointed out that inculturation of marriage rituals corrupts the Christian doctrines in the Convention in the pretext of making it more acceptable, meaningful and relevant.

In the foregoing paragraphs, I scrutinised some limitations to the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe as pointed out in the questionnaires, interviews and observations. It is my conclusion that inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe faced certain difficulties. The next section delineates the perceptions on the phenomena of inculturation. I

endeavour to explain respondents' perceptions in line with the inculturation of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

6.6 Perceptions on inculturation

I now examine the respondents' perceptions of inculturation of marriage rituals to determine the insights of the NBC of Zimbabwe. Different respondents perceived inculturation differently. Nathaniel (1994) remarked that despite the full mandate given to Catholic Bishops and priests to practise inculturation it is painful that in this important task of making Christianity more meaningful to Africans not much has been accomplished. This was evident in the questionnaires, interviews and observation results. In the NBC of Zimbabwe, the inculturation of marriage rituals had been done although to a certain extent.

A group of respondents in the Convention still looked down upon the African culture. This was noted by some Convention members in Matabeleland and Midlands regions. The questionnaire, observation and interview results confirmed the perception. The group of young respondents noted that inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe was not necessary. Instead Africa, particularly Zimbabwe and Christianity was supposed to change with time. This was in line with what was raised by Magesa (2004:10). Magesa reported that from the study he conducted a small group of young respondents articulated their conviction that inculturation was not called for. This shows that the young generation did not buy the idea of having inculturation in Africa. Therefore, there are still many Convention members who did not value the need for the inculturation of the marriage rituals. Instead they still preferred to walk, talk, and live in the white men's culture, which they regarded as superior to theirs (Anthony 2012:241).

6.7 Models of inculturation

The following models of inculturation helped me to investigate the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in Matabeleland and Midlands regions.

6.7.1 The Gospel as Subject of the Inculturation Process

One of the models I used regarded the Gospel as the subject of the inculturation process. The methods of considering the connection of the gospel to culture were similar to those that speak of "contextualisation of the gospel" (Bate 1994:3; 1991:88-97). The image here is of the Incarnation and in this model inculturation becomes evangelisation (cf De Napoli 1987). This model informed much of the earlier understanding of inculturation before the distinction between inculturation and "evangelisation of cultures" had been clarified. Thus, in *Cathechesi Tradendae* (CT 53) Pope John

Paul II refers to inculturation as a "neologism [which] expresses very well one factor of the great mystery of the incarnation".

In Africa Theresa Okure leant strongly on this model. Following Sarpong (1988) and the teachings of Pope John Paul II and Paul VI she says, "Our understanding of the mystery of the Incarnation should serve as the solid foundation for understanding inculturation" (Okure 1990:57). As the Good News of Jesus Christ meets the African reality of peoples of different cultures there is a mutual enrichment, which occurs. This meeting and enriching process is what is meant by inculturation.

In line with above mentioned model I was guided by the fact that as the Good News of the NBC of Zimbabwe was meeting the African reality of the Shona and Ndebele people there was a reciprocated augmentation which was happening. In actual fact there was a shared enhancement between the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the African reality of the Shona and Ndebele people in the inculturation of the marriage rituals. The encounter and enhancing process was the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. The methods of considering the connection of the gospel to culture were similar to those that speak of "contextualisation of the gospel" as proposed by Bate (1994:3; 1991:88-97). The image here was of the Incarnation and in this model inculturation became evangelisation in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

6.7.2 Jesus Christ as Subject of the Inculturation Process

Another model I applied regarded Jesus as the subject of the inculturation process (Bate 1994:3). I had observed that Okure's incarnational model of inculturation goes beyond the evangelisation of cultures discourse to posit Jesus Christ as the real subject of inculturation. According to Okure (1990:59), inculturation functions as the process by which Christ becomes "native to or incarnated in" particular African cultures. In line with Okure I had observed that without it Christ remained an outsider or a foreigner to a culture, he does not become a citizen; and then the culture itself cannot be redeemed by him' (Bate 1994:3). Therefore, in the inculturation of marriage rituals I ensured that Jesus Christ became the subject of the inculturation process in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Hence, Jesus Christ played a paramount role in the inculturation process of the marriage rituals. When applying the above model in the inculturation of the marriage rituals by the Convention I ensured that there was close transformation of genuine Shona and Ndebele cultural values through their incorporation in the NBC of Zimbabwe Christianity. More so, I ensured that Christianity was inserted into the Shona and Ndebele cultures. In this case, the motivation, model, the criterion, the

content and the purpose was that the Word of God became man, who is himself the subject and object of this Word. In this model the Good News was Jesus Christ. He was both the beginning point and the destination in the inculturation of the marriage rituals in the Convention.

It is noteworthy that the approach which considers Christ as the subject of the inculturation process is also accepted by Shorter (1988:61). Even Nyamiti's work (1991) focused on the developments within African Christology in providing understandings of Jesus which relate to African cultural categories. He points out that "Christology is the subject which has been most developed in today's African theology" (:3). Thus, taking Jesus Christ as the subject of the inculturation process of marriage rituals helped me in this research study the inculturation of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

6.7.3 The Faith as Subject of Inculturation

In this study I also used faith as the subject of the inculturation process. Bate (1994:5) thinks that faith as the subject of inculturation is another inculturation model, attractive to scholars with a Western background (Shorter 1988:59); George (1990:31, 4); Bosch 1991:452). Faith in this sense is designated by Shorter (1988:59) as "a religious tradition or affiliation ... a broad and undefined concept". Customarily the term has two senses: in its objective sense it refers to the body of truths, practices and traditions as expressed in the Scripture and tradition of the Church's teaching: Scripture, Creeds, Council definitions, Magisterial teaching and so forth. For Bate (1994:5) it is a *complexus* of doctrine to which one is called to assent to when making a profession of faith. In its second, more subjective sense, it designates the individual act of agreeing to God's presence in one's life. Such an act of faith is the result of grace and is itself a gift of God. It occurs both on the personal and communal level.

Considering the above highlighted points, I noted that faith was important in my study on the inculturation of the marriage ceremonies in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Why was it important? Faith in both these senses was seen in this model, to be in dialogue with Shona and Ndebele cultures. But faith particularly in the second phase was also comprehended as the coming together of the divine and the human response of faith to the divine, of faith which was also itself in some sense a divine gift. Therefore, it was faith itself comprehended in the complication of both senses, which is called to become a culture. "The faith needs to be part of a cultural synthesis" (George 1990: 40). Pope John Paul II cited by (George :1990) asserted that "a faith which does not become a culture is faith not fully received". Therefore, the use of this model in the study on inculturation

of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe helped a lot. How was it done? It was a process by which faith of the Shona and Ndebele people became culture, thereby synthesizing man's entire existence around Christ the wisdom of God. Thus, having faith as a model of inculturation in this study was commendable.

In the foregoing paragraphs, I furthered my missiological discourse by defining terms like missiology, culture and inculturation. This was done because they had a role in the inculturation of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe. Therefore, to use Dwane (1989:29) cited by Tsehle (2009:25), "Christianity must have a truly character if it is to remain in Africa and be the religion of Africa". I have examined the models of inculturation which are as follows: The Gospel as subject of the inculturation process; Jesus Christ as subject of the inculturation process; and the faith as subject of inculturation process. In line with the seven dimensions of the praxis matrix I found it necessary to apply all these models since they have emphasis on, agency, contextual understanding, ecclesial scrutiny, theological interpretation, strategic planning, reflexivity and spirituality. These dimensions enabled me to investigate inculturation of marriage rituals from the few points of the leaders, the members, the context, the theology and spirituality of the NBC of Zimbabwe in Midlands and Matabeleland regions. It is my conclusion that all such models were important in the inculturation of the marriage rituals in Convention. In the next section I focus on the spectacles that I used in the study.

6.8 Spectacles used

I used three spectacles to assess the issues raised in the discussion. These are outlined in the next section. These are Pentecostal, Conservative Approach and African Theologian position.

6.8.1 Pentecostal

Pentecostalism guided me⁴⁴, since the NBC of Zimbabwe is Pentecostal in character. In this case, I believed that faith must be strongly pragmatic and not something found purely by ritual or thinking.

In addition to this, as a Pentecostal I also believed that a person is sanctified when his or her life is dedicated to God and the person is separated from his or her past sinful life. In this case, I uphold the view that when a believer from NBC of Zimbabwe is sanctified he or she should be born again

⁴⁴ Pentecostalism is a form of Christianity that emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit and the direct experience of God by the believer

to Christ through the Holy Spirit. That person should turn away from the bad behaviours and thoughts of his or her old life.

Along with this, I also upheld the view of following baptism by immersion. In this case, water baptism is an outward symbol of a conversion that has already occurred. In this case, the conversion is essential whilst water baptism is additional element. Infant Baptism is not practised in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

I upheld the view that infants are dedicated to God and be blessed. This was done in remembrance of the Bible stories of young children brought to God. Furthermore, I also believed in baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is the central event in Pentecostalism.

6.8.2 Conservative Approach

In the reading of the Bible, I applied the Conservative Approach. Scholars like Soccer (2010) point out that there are three different approaches to reading the Bible, namely the Conservative, the Liberal and the Ultra-Conservative. One who is conservative favours established views and principles and tends to be opposed to change. In this case there is a strict observance to the Word of God and opposed to changes to the Gospel. Bible interpretation in a liberal approach favours a loose or accurate view of the scriptures⁴⁵.

In reading the Bible in relation to the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe I used the Conservative Approach. In this case, I did not believe that there are many ways acceptable to interpret God's word. I believed that there is one way that God intended us to receive his Word. What I strongly believed was that when it comes to Bible interpretation I must approach it with a conservative mind-set.

I used the Conservative Approach because this attitude is coherent with what God's word commands about how the believers' attitude should be towards His law (Soccer: 2010). I noted that some things do not change. For instance, God does not change as revealed by Malachi 3 verse 6 and Hebrews 13 verse 8. Because His love and concern for people remains unvarying even how people respond to his word should be like that. Something that does not change is the peoples' need for a remedy of sin (Romans 3: 23; 6:23). The gospel of God does not vary. For instance,

⁴⁵ Soccer (2010) points out that one who is liberal does not view themselves as restricted to recognised or traditional attitudes or view.

Peter said, “But the word of the Lord stands forever. And this is the word of God which was preached to you” (1 Peter 1:25). Paul even pointed out that those who change the Gospel will be condemned (Galatians 1:6-9). When Joshua was about to assume leadership of the people of Israel following the death of Moses God also said, “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or left that you may be successful wherever you go” (Joshua 1:7). This shows that following the word of God faithfully is necessary. Therefore, because of such commands from the word of God I used the Conservative Approach when reading the bible to ensure that the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe was done according to the word of God.

I did not use the liberal method when interpreting the Bible because this gives liberal mind-set. Those with a liberal mind set advocate for freedom in their messages and practice of fellowship. The liberals seek to go beyond God’s standard. One may end up using the Bible to make allowances for adulterous marriages. As Soccer (2010) points out, “Just as a liberal approach to God’s word allows one to teach and believe virtually any message, it also allows one to practise nearly anything as well”. This might even promote unfaithfulness in the NBC of Zimbabwe in the inculturation of its marriage rituals. Even same-sex marriage may be promoted yet the NBC of Zimbabwe encourages monogamy in the Convention.

We are not to deviate from God’s pattern “to the right or to the left”. (Joshua 1 verse 7) We are not to take liberties that God has not given, nor should we bind upon others what God does not require. We must do all that He has commanded, believe what has been revealed in the Bible, teach all that His word says, and be content to remain within the bounds of Scripture” (Soccer 2010).

This, then, is the Conservative Approach that I used when reading the Bible. I used this approach in the study of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. This type of approach is biblically commended if compared to the Liberal approach. More so, I did not use the Ultra-Conservative approach since it did not fit quite well on my study on the inculturation of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe. Above all, I would like to point out that I did not use the Radical, the Feminist and the Womanist approaches when reading the Bible.

Having delineated my Conservative Approach in the next section, I delineate the African theological position I took in the study on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the Convention.

6.8.3 African Theologian position

I used the African theologian position since my area of study was African Theology - a discipline within Christian theology. Musasiwa (2002) says that after decades of disagreement and confusion, consent is now emerging that African Theology is that theology done in Africa in order to be relevant to diversities of African context. The study intended to assess the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in order to find out the nature of its theological viewpoint regarding the subject.

My African Theologian position was based on the fact that African Theology plays three tasks. Firstly, African Theology facilitates a cognitive understanding of the nature of the Christian religion as it applies to Africa (Musasiwa and others: 2010). Christ should be cognitively represented as the answer to the questions that Africans ask, and that he should come into the world of African cosmology to redeem human beings as Africans understand them even in line with marriage rituals. Secondly, African Theology facilitates an affective understanding of the nature of the Christian religion as it is applied to Africa. In this case, the call by African Theology for the indigenisation of the church includes the whole range of the affective dimension of the cultural expression of the Christian faith. Joyful occasions like weddings in the NBC of Zimbabwe, are celebrated with singing, dancing, ululating and clapping of hands. E. Bolaji Idowu is an example of how African Theology facilitates the affective dimension of the Christian faith in all the dimensions that include feelings, attitudes and values. Thirdly, African Theology facilitates the lifestyle dimension of the Christian faith as it applies to Africa. Such a position guided me in the study on inculturation of marriage rituals within the Convention.

In a letter to the Jesuits Father Arrupe (1993:47) defines inculturation as

.... the incarnation of the Christian life and the Christian message, in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but it becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring out a new creation

My African theological position was that in the inculturation of Christian faith from United States of America it did not change in the African context. Instead it should absorb African cultural elements like payment of lobola, ululating, dancing and initiation rituals wherever it passed through. The gospel of Christ with its message of salvation and eternal life becomes meaningful in as much as it permeates the African life of the NBC of Zimbabwe Christian. Thus, inculturation of marriage rituals enabled the African Christian of the NBC of Zimbabwe to bring to God the best

of his /her way of living, way of relating, and manner of thinking and accept the challenges of the Gospel in his /her culture.

Ogilvie (2007) observed that inculturation of the Christian message has been a historical reality and practice of the church throughout history. On the other hand, Crollius (1978:722) notes that the term inculturation in the church in Africa emerged during the period 1974 to 1981. It came when it was the subject of some theological enquiry, particularly among the Jesuits, because of discussion on the role of culture in the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (Bate 1994). According to Gifford (2008), the existence of African Theology is no longer a subject of debate. He believes that we should avoid the term “inculturation” when discussing East African Theology in Kenya and speak of “theology of culture”. This would enable him to include some theologians who would repudiate the missionaries’ original programme of inculturation. Because of this background I wanted to critique the inculturation of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in Matabeleland and Midlands regions.

In the preceding paragraphs I have established that my African theological position was rooted in African Theology. The next section focuses on basis for argumentation, since it played a significant in the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

6.9 Basis for argument

My argument is based on H. Richard Niebuhr and David Bosch’s works. First is H. Richard Niebuhr’s (1894-1962) *Christ and Culture* which is a classic work. His work reveals that he speaks of Christ and culture as the two points of reference for faith and ethics and challenges a most modern age group of Christians to be true to Christ in a materialistic age. In fact, according to *New York Times* Book Review H. Richard Niebuhr distinguishes five typical answers to the Christian’s problem of setting the relation between Christ and the culture, which holds him as the sea holds its fish. I had to consider such a stance in the inculturation of marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Secondly, my argument was based on what was put forward by Bosch (1991). According to Bosch (1991:454) “inculturation suggests a double movement: there is at once inculturation of Christianity and Christianization of culture”. On the inculturation of Christianity Bosch (1991:451) suggested that a genuine Evangelical message should also take into consideration “the meaning

systems already present in the context”. This means that a really inculturated Christianity within Midlands and Matabeleland regions should be a contextually informed Good news.

My basis was also influenced by the nature of inculturation theology that originated in the 1960s, with the indigenous theology of people like John Mbiti (1969) and E. Bolaji Idowu (1965). Bediako (2000:49) says the broad goal of this theology was to “achieve integration between the African pre-Christian religious experience and African Christian commitment in ways that would ensure the integrity of African Christian Identity and selfhood”. This indigenous theology was later developed into Translation Theology by Lamin Sanneh and Kwame Bediako. These two scholars based their theological conviction on the fact that the Christian faith unlike Islam is eminently translatable. The translation of the Christian Bible into Africa’s numerous vernacular languages is only symbolic of the cultural translatability of the Christian faith. Bediako and Sanneh’s call goes beyond the dressing the Christian faith in appropriate African cultural mode. They call for the Africanisation of the Christian faith which goes beyond the Christianisation of the African culture (Musasiwa and others 2010:12). Therefore, I can give the missiological critique of the inculturation of the marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe of Matabeleland and Midlands regions.

Such a double movement is also described by Parratt (2000) who discusses the issue of Christianity in new contexts in chapter one in section 1.1 where I discussed the motivation for the study. Parratt (2000) discusses the interaction of Christianity and Hinduism in Bengal, and its interaction with the African Christians in Botswana as well. For him the Indian case is about how old culture is altered by new religion but the Botswana case is about how new religion can be altered by old culture. Given such a background from Africa, Asia, Botswana and Bengal, I sought to give a missiological critique of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe in Matabeleland and Midlands regions.

In the preceding paragraphs I have examined the basis for my argument. Having scrutinised my basis for argument, in the next paragraph I give a summary of the whole chapter on the missiological discourse.

6.10 Summary

In this chapter, I attempted to define terms like missiology, culture and inculturation. Under inculturation, I endeavoured to analyse the term inculturation distinguishing it from enculturation. I also highlighted kind of spectacles I used to look at the various issues / questions rising from the

discussion. I attempted to answer the following questions: Am I Pentecostal? Am I conservative when reading the Bible? Am I wearing the spectacles of an African Theologian? In this chapter, the strategies for mission were delineated. In the next chapter, I will deliberate on, summary conclusions, and recommendations as part of the Strategies for Mission in the Praxis Cycle.

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Introduction

Just like my chapter 6 this chapter fits quite well in the Phase 4 of the Praxis Cycle, which is on planning for action or missiological strategies. In this chapter; I summarise the preceding six chapters of this research study focusing on the research process and the results per objectives of the study. After that I shall present my conclusions and make recommendations.

7.1 Summary of the research process

In line with the summary of the research process, I would like to point out that I had observed that Roman Catholic Church members had written most of the works on inculturation in which they focused on the Roman Catholic Church. These works included Anthony (2012), Mwandayi (2011), Nwachukwu-Udaku (2011), and Kurgat (2009). Other works I considered were Shoko (2009), Amadi (2008), Oglivie (2007), Magesa (2004) and Gundani (2009). I found the following insights usable for the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Inculturation had a controversial role wherever it took place when a faith embodied in one culture encountered another culture. This was exacerbated by the fact that in many church formations African traditional practices and the Christian faith are mutually exclusive. It brings a conflict of cultures. It divides personal allegiance of church members between culture and faith. It even splits members of the same families into opposing camps. It is also a problem for individual peace and sanity, and for social harmony and cohesion.

In the research process I adapted the Pastoral Cycle to direct my research as follows: Firstly, in “Pastoral planning” I observed the challenges of inculturating marriage practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe and focussed my research questions according to the seven dimensions of the “Praxis Matrix” as adapted by Kritzinger (Banda 2010:128).

The main aim in this research study was to examine and explore the kind of inculturation that could help facilitate greater engagement between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele cultures in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. The purpose was to analyse the NBC of Zimbabwe, concentrating on inculturation of marriage rituals. I carried this study on six established NBC of Zimbabwe churches in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

In chapter 1 I gave the motivation for the study, a statement of the problem, and the research questions. The purpose and objectives of the study and the significance of the study were

delineated. The research methods, research designs and research techniques were briefly outlined as well as the limitations of the study. The basic assumptions of the study were examined. A summary of the review of literature was outlined. I also defined the key missiological terms used in the study.

Chapter 2 analysed the context of the NBC of Zimbabwe to create a valid conceptual framework. This chapter corresponds to the context analysis of the praxis cycle. I scrutinised both the social and church context of the NBC of Zimbabwe in the light of the following questions: What is the African context of the marriage rituals? What is the Zimbabwean context of the marriage rituals? Secondly, I considered the following questions: What is the background history and origin of the NBC of Zimbabwe? What promoted the birth of the NBC of Zimbabwe? What is the literature from other churches? What is the literature of NBC of Zimbabwe since they have a strong bearing on inculturation of the marriage rituals? Wood (1977), Hoad (1986: 19), Motsi (1991: 4) Religion facts article (2004-2014), Makaza (2013) and Chabata (2014) are some of the sources referred to.

This context analysis followed the pastoral cycle of Holland and Henriot (1983) as outlined by Baron, Mangayi and Nel (2017:22). I was able to analyse the historical dimensions and structural elements of the NBC of Zimbabwe. I also analysed the local, regional, national and international level of the NBC of Zimbabwe. I explored the faith and religious dimensions of traditions that represent that faith since “The Christian tradition does not exist in a vacuum. It takes shape in specific historical contexts and this development is still going on because of the dynamic nature of the incarnation. God, in Jesus Christ revealed his mission in the world” (Baron, Mangayi and Nel 2017:23).

In Chapter 3 I surveyed the marriage rituals among the NBC church members. This too fitted quite well in the context analysis of the praxis cycle. I studied the marriage rituals and the responses of the NBC churches.

In Chapter 4 I analysed the data gathered in the survey. In the study, I used several methods for this, including the seven-point Pastoral Cycle propounded by Kritzing (2010). I used this as the grid or framework for the missiological questions. Though Kritzing and others applied it as a methodological framework, in this research study I used it as the framework for the missiological questions

I used the phenomenological, theological and historical methods to complement this. I therefore employed a mixed methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. I also applied a case study design combined with a descriptive survey of the NBC churches in Zimbabwe. Simple random sampling was used to select the lay members, whilst purposive sampling was used to select the pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members and the National Executive committee members.

In accordance with Kritzing's dimension of Agency my target population was made up of the National Executive members, pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members and laity from the NBC of Zimbabwe in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. All these were of the Shona and Ndebele cultures.

I chose as my research sample 140 research respondents from six of the thirteen denominations of the Convention in two regions, namely, the Midlands and the Matabeleland. In this case 106 out of 125 finally became my questionnaire respondents whilst 15 became my interviewees in the research process. In line with the pastoral cycle phase of Contextual Understanding I conducted my research via questionnaires, observations and interviews. To validate the instruments, I carried out a pilot study on part of the population. The pre-testing enabled me to predict the future outcomes of the research study.

I used the I.B.M. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 to produce the frequencies and percentages for the quantitative analysis. I used coding and themes for qualitative data. I presented, analysed and discussed data according to the themes that emerged. Finally, I synthesized the qualitative and quantitative data and used the literature related to the research study to confirm or refute the findings.

In Chapter 5 I discussed the findings in line with the theological interpretation of the Praxis Cycle. In order to establish the type of inculturation followed by the church members, that could expedite greater engagement between the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals and the Shona and Ndebele cultures, I explored their inculturation patterns. The findings showed that the NBC of Zimbabwe in Midlands and Matabeleland regions is inculturating the marriage rituals. This was done although to certain extent. I established that Shona and Ndebele culture practices, such as bride price payment, ululation, dancing and giving of gifts, marrying someone whose background is known, guidance and counselling had been adopted. However, there were some aspects like the veneration

of ancestral spirits which were not adopted. Moreover, adoption of some cultural practices, like the *kusungira* ritual, were controversial.

I examined the factors that had motivated this inculturation. For instance, keeping cultures, making the believers feel at home, preventing disputes, as well as promoting soul winning. There were a number of possible benefits to this inculturation of marriage rituals, such as one combined wedding ceremony, winning more believers to Christ, and creating good relationships. However, there were also a number of constraints like fear of syncretism and clash of doctrines. Also many ethnic groups were indicated to be the hindrances to the inculturation process of the marriage rituals.

Most of the respondents in the NBC of Zimbabwe thought that the inculturation of the marriage rituals was to be done. However, a minority thought that the inculturation of marriage rituals should be discouraged. These differences can be attributed to the perceptions of the respondents. The different perceptions were in line with the cultural background and the experiences of the respondents. Those who perceived aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture in the running of the NBC marriage rituals were likely to have grown up in that cultural environment. On the other hand, those who did not grow in a cultural environment which promotes Shona and Ndebele culture could not value such cultural practices.

The missiological critical critique of the inculturation of the marriage rituals revealed that the inculturation the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals benefits a variety of people who range from policy-makers and policy implementers. It has to assist policy evaluators, pastors, elders, deacons and the laity. Students and other future researchers are also likely to benefit.

More so the study came up with a type of inculturation that expedite greater engagement of inculturation between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele cultures. In addition to this, I came up with research models and theories on how the Christian culture could be linked to African Traditional culture of the Shona and Ndebele people in the NBC of Zimbabwe. My research enabled the African Christians in the NBC of Zimbabwe to understand faith from their own perspectives and languages. By the end of the day, they had a comprehension of their faith. Moreover, the study brought out benefits of the inculturation in the church. The study unearthed the nature of inculturation outside the Roman Catholic Church with reference to NBC of Zimbabwe. I came up with information on whether it is African traditional culture of the Shona and Ndebele societies that is Christianized or it is vice versa. Above all, my research brought out new ideas and solutions to the problems of inculturation of marriage rituals in this church. These

findings and recommendations can then be used in pastoral ministry to develop church leaders like National Executive committee members, pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members and the laity. Therefore, it is explicit that the study was important in a multidimensional manner. Having delineated the above in the next section I focus on the summary of results per objectives of the study.

7.2 Summary of results per objectives of the study

In this study, I sought to give a missiological critique of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. The purpose of the research study was to examine and explore the kind of inculturation that could help facilitate greater engagement of inculturation of the marriage rituals of the NBC of Zimbabwe into the Shona and Ndebele cultures in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. In this section a summary of the results is presented according to the research aim and objectives of the study as set in chapter one under section 1.4 on purpose and objectives of the study.

In line with **objective 1** on Agency I observed that the NBC of Zimbabwe leaders like National Executive Members, pastors, elders, deacons and church committee members worked towards the inculturation of marriage rituals in the Convention. The majority of these agents acknowledged the fact that the inculturation of marriage rituals had been in existence in the Convention since the time they became members. Shona and Ndebele cultural practices which were biblical were observed in the running of marriage rituals.

In line with **objective 2** on contextual understanding I noted that the agents were of the view that inculturation played a paramount role in the NBC of Zimbabwe in encouraging upholding of marriage cultural rituals. For instance, table 4.9 showed that 34 (32.1%) of the respondents thought that the Shona and Ndebele cultures played the role of encouraging the upholding of marriage cultural rituals.

The questionnaires result also showed that encouraging payment of lobola was raised as one of the roles of inculturation in the NBC of Zimbabwe. This was confirmed by a number of interviewees like Pastor A1 (Interview 7, 8 December 2016) from Gweru in Midlands, Ndebele church committee member A4 (Interview 8, 8 December 2016) and Pastor BI (Interview 4, 17 December 2017) from Bulawayo in Matabeleland. In this case, the Ndebele culture ensures the payment of bride price (*amalobolo*) in line with the marriage rituals, whilst the Shona culture ensures the payment of the bride price (*roora*).

But in section 4.2.2.1.1 the interview and observation results revealed that there was a controversy over the time to pay lobola and the conduct of the marriage rituals. A number of interview and observation results showed that people did not agree on the proper time. For instance, after one couple at church D wedded on the 13th of November 2016 a controversy arose among interviewees from various churches in Matabeleland regions.

In line with **objective 3** on the dimension of Ecclesial scrutiny I found out that there are or were a number of marriage practices that are or were in the NBC of Zimbabwe churches. In this case the ecclesial authorities like National Executive Members, pastors, elders, deacons and church committee members determined which Shona and Ndebele cultural practices could be adopted in the Convention following a congregational governance. These practices included payment of lobola, *ukucola*, ululation, dancing, clapping of hands *kusungira* ritual. In the previous chapter, I pointed out that *kusungira* ritual is a practice whereby a newly married woman who had fallen pregnant for the first time is taken back to her parents to live with them from seven to eight months until the time she gave birth. This gave the mother of the pregnant woman time to monitor her daughter during the last months of her pregnancy. She was given guidance and counselling on how to handle the newly born baby since it would be the first time for that woman to give birth.

From most of the results from questionnaires, interviews and observation, I noted that the kind of inculturation to expedite greater commitment to inculturation between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele cultures was that of encouraging payment of the bride price. Bride price is called *roora* in Shona language and *amalobolo* in Ndebele language in the NBC of Zimbabwe. All this was confirmed by Gombe (2000), Thorpe (1996), and Andifasi (1970:28) cited by Mangena and Ndlovu (2013:473). In this case, no one was allowed to conduct a wedding ceremony in the NBC of Zimbabwe before he paid part of or the whole bride price as demanded by the in-laws. Payment was an exhibition of love, which exhibited great commitment of the bride and groom to marriage.

In addition to this, I established that the kind of inculturation should ensure that the traditional ritual of paying the bride price could still be conducted within the NBC of Zimbabwe since members thought it was a noble idea. This is in line with the findings of Mangena and Ndlovu (2013:475), that in traditional Ndebele marriage, before the children were born, the girl's father paid more than the boy's father did, in the establishment of the new family. For example, he gave his daughter a beast to take to her new home. The beast was a sign to the groom's family that the

bride was serious with marriage. This beast became the foundation of the home as it multiplied. It also protected the dignity of her family and hers throughout marriage.

I observed that the type of inculturation had to preach and teach on the advantages of paying lobola in line with the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. I established that lobola is a decisive stabilizing factor in Shona and Ndebele traditional marriage rituals and a guarantee of indissolubility. This was supported by Hatendi (1973:144) who said, “Bride price is a significant gift, an acknowledgement of a priceless debt which the bride groom’s family group owes to the bride’s family group.... It legitimizes the children born of the socially accepted union within the father’s lineage...”. Andifasi (1970:28) cited by Mangena and Ndlovu (2013:473) also said *roora/lobola* is “... an outward manifestation of the young man’s love for his fiancé and is a safeguard against groundless divorce...”. Therefore, the attachment of a value to the woman was a way of according a status, which is commendable even in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

Along with this, I established that the kind of inculturation had to ensure that the groom and relatives appreciated the parents or guardians for bringing up the wife-to-be. This was through the payment of two beasts, one for the mother-in-law and one for the father-in-law. This is in line with Mawere and Mawere (2010:227), Gombe (2000:106) and Sibanda (1998:109) cited by Mangena and Ndlovu (2013:473-474). However, the beasts were not to be dedicated to the ancestral spirits since that would be against the NBC of Zimbabwe Christian doctrines of worshipping God through Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, I noted that the type of inculturation had to provide teachings that lobola had a biblical basis so that the Christian values are not lost in the process of inculturating the marriage rituals as shown by Genesis 34:12 and Exodus 22:17.

I also established that the kind of inculturation had to safeguard the NBC of Zimbabwe’s teaching that discourages the charging of exorbitant bride prices. For instance, from the questionnaire respondents in the previous chapter I noted that the Shona and the Ndebele respondents thought that some of the Shona cultural practices were too expensive and oppressive. This was confirmed by most of the observation and interview results. They revealed the general feeling of the respondents that the payment of lobola among the Shona was too costly and unjust as compared to the Ndebele one. On the payment of lobola Mawere and Mawere (2010:226) declared that the father requests for a certain amount of bride price (*pfuma*) called *rugaba /rusambo* which is meant to cover the heavy responsibility the parent underwent in raising the daughter. The groom is

expected to pay a head of cattle (*danga*). Moreover; some are made to buy cell phones and cars as part of the bride price that may have been charged. The bride price for a bride who got married soon after attainment of diploma or a degree becomes extremely expensive. The parents and relatives of the bride would be saying they wasted a lot on the bride educating her and she acquired a fresh qualification (*chitupa chinyoro*). Therefore, the bride price arrangements were becoming more commercialised by numerous Shona people in these modern days.

I noted under 4.2.2.1.1 on controversy on the time to pay lobola and conduct of the marriage rituals that the debate outlined above concurs with what is propounded by some black women theologians. For instance, according to Landman (2000:185) Purity Malinga at a research meeting of the Faculty of Theology and Religion at Unisa, declared that lobola is one of the reasons for violence against black women since it reduces women to be the property of men. Commenting on that, Kobo (2016) remarked that when Purity Malinga gave such a statement the black men in the meeting accused her arguing against women for using feminism to divide black into male and female. This shows that some Black women theologians were against the payment of lobola. This makes the payment of lobola a controversial issue.

Therefore, I concluded that whilst payment of lobola and conduct of marriage rituals could be incorporated in the NBC of Zimbabwe teachings, I noted that there were controversies regarding these aspects of inculturation. I showed in chapters four and five that some of these controversies coincided with the times when the marriage rituals should be conducted. As such, the kind of inculturation should consider such controversial practices like the paying bride price and marrying in the sacred month of November.

I noted that inculturating *kusungira* ritual was still an issue of debate within the NBC of Zimbabwe. Some respondents said it was not proper to conduct it. On the other hand, another group was of the opinion that such cultural practices were to be performed, since the pregnant person was provided with guidance and counselling on how to handle the new baby by her close family relatives whom she was comfortable with.

I established that the kind of inculturation NBC of Zimbabwe had to preach and teach against the views that perpetuate the subordination and separation of females from males in a patriarchal society. This actually subjugates women and deprives them of their self-worth. The positive images of women in Shona and Ndebele religions of the world were to be promoted. The traditional

forms of the oppressive and one side-dominated approach, which arose from patriarchal religions, were to be discarded.

In the dimension of Ecclesial scrutiny pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members of a particular church in the Convention played a role in determining which Shona and Ndebele cultural practices should be incorporated in the Convention. The church leaders followed a congregational type of governance. The church leaders determined and outlined cultural practices that were biblical which could be used in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were regarded as not scriptural. The NBC of Zimbabwe members were not allowed to consult ancestral spirits to seek guidance and protection in the marriage rituals, which was a challenge to the inculturation of marriage rituals.

I concluded that some of the aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture were regarded as outdated by the respondents. The other reason why some cultural practices were not incorporated was that their origin and the value of retaining them were not known. Some could not be adopted because of clash of doctrines. Some of the cultural practices were not in line with Christian doctrines. For instance, those that promoted the use of ancestral spirits were against the Christian doctrine of regarding Jesus Christ as the mediator between God and man. Some NBC of Zimbabwe members thought that inculturation of marriage rituals would make their prayer requests to God not to be achieved since they believed that God is for a pure Christian religion.

Another limitation was that there were many cultural and ethnic groups in the NBC of Zimbabwe apart from the Shona and Ndebele. These included the Venda, Tonga, Sotho, Shangaan and Kalanga. Each tribe represented would need her own culture to be incorporated. That would cause a lot of confusion in the conducting of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. It might also cause fights and divisions within the church.

Some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were expensive and seemed oppressive. The danger of syncretism was raised as one of the obstacles to the incorporation of Shona and Ndebele cultural practices into the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. Therefore, that became a hindrance to the inculturation of marriage rituals. I therefore concluded that the kind of inculturation that could facilitate greater engagement of commitment between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele culture was quite diverse.

On **objective 4** concerning biblical tradition in line with Kritzinger's dimension of Discernment for action, I established that the NBC of Zimbabwe leaders and members interpreted the Bible vis-a-vis the marriage practices in line with what the constitution of the Convention regarded as biblical. The leaders and members promoted payment of lobola because they believed that that was also done in the Old Testament and New Testament. For instance, Elder B2 from Bulawayo in Matabeleland region (Interview 5, 17 December 2016) pointed out the payment of bride price is supported by a number of verses in the Bible. Elder B2 cited Genesis 34:12 as supportive evidence when Shechem spoke to Jacob, Dinah's father and brothers saying that a price and gift for the bride should be made. In the New Testament, Jesus in the Gospel of John also attended the wedding at Cana.

They accepted monogamy basing on the Convention's constitution and its biblical support. However, they did not support polygamy since it was not in line with the NBC of Zimbabwe constitution, although it was biblical. I observed that some Holy men like Abraham, Jacob, Elkanah and many more shown in the Christian Bible were polygamists.

The NBC of Zimbabwe did not support ancestor veneration, since it clashed with the doctrinal belief of worshipping God through Jesus Christ (John 14:6) where Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me". Therefore, an appropriate spirituality for inculturating marriage practices should be one "which arises from a creative and dynamic synthesis of faith and life, forged in the crucible of the desire to live out the Christian faith, authentically, responsibly, effectively, and fully" (McGrath 1999:9). In short, I can say this type of spirituality is one that animates the NBC of Zimbabwe believer's life, which moves a person's faith to greater depths and perfection.

On **objective 5** in the dimension of Discernment for Action the questionnaire, interview and observation results revealed that various reasons motivated the NBC of Zimbabwe to adopt some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices into their marriage rituals. Keeping cultures, winning believers to Christ and preventing disputes were some of the reasons why the NBC of Zimbabwe incorporated some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices into the marriage rituals. Furthermore, some of the cultural practices were adopted because they were biblically commendable.

The incorporation of these practices made the NBC of Zimbabwe members feel at home. Some were fused because of the desires of the parents. In this case, the parents of the bride and the groom would be playing a leading role.

The NBC of Zimbabwe had a concept similar to what was observed by Magesa in the Catholic Church in Kenya (Magesa 2004:10). The Catholic officials cited cultural awareness and pride on the one hand and Christianity's potential contribution to the growth of African culture on the other, as one of the reasons for inculturation. For the African Christians in Kenya to identify with the Christian church, and treat it as their own, rather than as a foreign organisation, it should be deeply-seated in the local cultures, taking into itself the people's customs and ways of doing things.

This was also in line with what Soosamariam said: that in the process of transmitting the Good News, evangelisation must purify culture. It was therefore prudent that in the inculturation of the Gospel message, its meanings and values must be declared to the hearers using their own cultural symbols and language to enable them to feel at home in their own culture and be excited about sharing in the mission of the of the Universal Church (Soosamariam 2006:1). These were some of the driving forces for the inculturation of the marriage rituals within the NBC of Zimbabwe in Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

On **objective 6** in the dimension of Reflexivity I established that the NBC of Zimbabwe had been able to inculturate Shona and Ndebele marriage rituals although only to a limited extent because of numerous limiting factors. The NBC of Zimbabwe was recommended to appreciate the culture of the Shona and Ndebele people and accept the situation as it was to promote and enhance the process of inculturating the marriage rituals.

Many Shona and Ndebele cultural practices had been fused into the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals. For instance, bride price payment was adopted since the respondents saw numerous benefits of having it. Moreover, the respondents had perceived that this was in line with their Christian beliefs. For instance, in Genesis 29:16-28 of the Christian Bible, Jacob had to work for seven years for Rachel, which indicated a high level of commitment to the marriage. Although polygamy is biblical, it has not been adopted into the NBC of Zimbabwe because it is against the constitution of the Convention.

The study revealed that the adoption of certain Shona and Ndebele cultural rituals had a problem that some members of the NBC of Zimbabwe would end up observing some rituals secretly, which

might not be biblical at all. This occurred because it was not possible for the pastors, elders and deacons to monitor each and every ritual observed. For instance, I observed that some Ndebele and Shona parents would dedicate the bride to ancestral spirits when she was going to the in-laws' home. When the bride reached the home of the groom, she would be committed to the ancestral spirits of the groom's family. Therefore, it was a bit difficult to monitor the veneration of ancestral spirits by the parents and relatives when a bride was married. The parents and the relatives of the bride and groom would do that in privacy since they knew that the NBC of Zimbabwe would not condone such rituals. Therefore, the pastors, elders, deacons and church committee members should continuously preach and teach against such activities in the Convention, since this is against the NBC of Zimbabwe Christian doctrine.

Whilst payment of lobola and conduct of marriage rituals could be incorporated in the NBC of Zimbabwe teachings, I noted that controversies arose regarding these. I showed in chapter four and five that some of these controversies were about the times when the marriage rituals should be conducted. Whilst some asserted that one could marry and pay lobola any time of the year including November, others were strongly against such a position, which shows that this was a controversial matter in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, I also noted that the NBC of Zimbabwe adopted the Shona and Ndebele cultural aspect of marrying someone whose background is known.⁴⁶ The NBC of Zimbabwe encouraged the members to marry or to be married to someone within the NBC of Zimbabwe, who was morally upright. The NBC of Zimbabwe members had done that so that their Christian doctrines would remain undiluted.

However, from the findings I also established that some NBC of Zimbabwe members would marry people from other churches like the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, the Dutch Reformed Church in Zimbabwe and the Roman Catholic Church. Some believers even married non-Christians with the hope of ministering to such a person

⁴⁶ This group of believers followed a Shona proverb which says *Roorerana! vamatongo* or Ndebele proverb which says *Ukhuni olungaziwayo kaluthezw* which means one should marry a person whom he or she knows his or her background.

to become a convert. This group of congregants thought that they had powers to marry anyone they felt like marrying regardless of that person's cultural background and behaviour,⁴⁷

I found that the NBC of Zimbabwe even adopted the guidance and counselling of the Shona and Ndebele cultures. Whilst in the Shona and Ndebele cultures mostly the aunts and uncles did this, I noted that in the NBC of Zimbabwe elders, deacons and pastors mostly did this. The youth advisors would guide and counsel especially during the youth meetings and conferences. What the youth advisors, elders, deacons and pastors complemented the role of the aunts and uncles in the Shona and Ndebele cultures. This was quite evident during the conduct of bridal showers and bachelor's parties especially in preparation for wedding ceremonies.

I noted that ululating, dancing and giving of gifts were some of the cultural practices that were incorporated into the NBC of Zimbabwe. This was quite evident when a bride was being sent to her mother-in-law and father-in law for the first time. This is called *kupereka muroora* in Shona language, whilst in Ndebele this is called *ukuphelekezela umalokhazana*. This was done during the conduct of NBC of Zimbabwe wedding ceremonies when the members would be conducting rituals associated with such events.

In terms of Kritzinger's Dimension of Reflexivity I noted that the inculturation of marriage rituals had a number of possible benefits to the NBC of Zimbabwe members. For instance, this was done to win more believers to Christ as confirmed by most of the interview results. Another possible benefit was the building of long lasting marriages within the Convention as well as having one combined wedding ceremony.

Cultural practices were also adopted to cultivate good morals, which also created strong relationships. Such relationships were made through uniting families with strong ties as well as having strong relations between the families and the church. Therefore, a number of factors drove the NBC of Zimbabwe to adopt some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices into their marriage rituals.

On **objective 7** in the Dimension of Spirituality on perceptions of the inculturation of marriage rituals by the NBC of Zimbabwe, I concluded that the population respondents had varied perceptions on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. The majority

⁴⁷This other group of believers followed the Shona proverb, which says *Moyo muti unomera paunoda* or Ndebele proverb, which says *Umkhosi wenhliziyo awuphalalelwa* which means one should marry whom he or she feels like marrying.

thought that that the inculturation of marriage rituals should be encouraged. A minority were opposed to that. Some members noted that some cultural practices preserved *Ubuntu / unhu/ vumunhu*. Therefore, there was a need for them to be accepted. For example, the initiation rituals played a significant role of guiding and counselling people. This also helped in that they reduced the rate of divorce in the church, community and nation. Thus, they should be promoted because they were full of good morals and respect.

Moreover, that group of respondents pointed out that the cultural practices would act as an evangelism tool to win people to Christ Jesus. They should be encouraged in the running of the NBC of Zimbabwe to lure more people to Christ. These reduced barriers that could be built between the NBC of Zimbabwe and traditional culture. For Christianity to be realised, it should start by adopting some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural rituals. However, I observed that this group of people also asserted that the rituals that were associated with the veneration of ancestral spirits were not to be promoted since they were against the biblical principles.

Some of the members even indicated that the inculturation of marriage rituals should not be done at all since some of the cultural practices were not biblical. For instance, some members could practise ancestor veneration since no one would be able to monitor such activities at homes. A green light to inculturation might therefore result in syncretism being practised in the NBC of Zimbabwe, and the essence of the Christian gospel could therefore be lost. Some thought that their Christian God might end up even failing to answer their prayers since the believers would be supporting the works of the devil.

The interview results from some churches showed the NBC of Zimbabwe might end up losing her Christian flavour. So it would be difficult in the end to draw a line between Christianity and the Shona and Ndebele cultures, since the two would have been fused into each other.

The minority group thought that this might cause conflicts since the NBC of Zimbabwe is made up of members from varied cultural backgrounds, including Sotho, Kalanga, Venda, Shangaan, Tonga and Chewa people as well as Shona and Ndebele. Each tribe would therefore need to be represented in terms of marriage cultural rituals. This would then cause serious divisions and fights in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Each cultural group would want her own cultural rituals to be adopted in the inculturation of marriage rituals. That would cause confusion to the believers in the Convention. Even the marriage officers would have a hard time to understand every cultural practice to be used in the conduct of marriage rituals.

This group was strongly against anything with Shona and Ndebele culture in it. They thought Shona and Ndebele cultural practices were demonic and satanic in nature. Some of these respondents noted that some of the cultural practices were expensive and oppressive as well. Thus, they thought that payment of lobola should be done away with. As one interviewee put it, “In my opinion Shona cultural aspects should not be promoted in the running of marriage rituals because they make marriages to be very expensive and not affordable especially to the non-working class”. It was also pointed out that there were certain Shona families who demanded too much money or cattle if the brides were highly educated. Even cars and cell phones had been made to be part of the bride price. This promoted cohabitation and living-in among the Shona and Ndebele cultures. Thus, the group did not buy the idea of encouraging the inculturation of marriage cultural rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe. Therefore, the Convention is implored to continuously preach and teach against the charging of exorbitant bride price. Having outlined the summary in line with the results per objective of the study in the next section I delineate the conclusions that can be drawn from the research study.

7.3 Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the research study are as follows:

1. Inculturation of marriage rituals is significant to the NBC of Zimbabwe. Inculturation of marriage rituals has roles of upholding cultural rituals, guidance and counselling, promoting unity between NBC of Zimbabwe and community and is a basis for strong marriages. Through inculturation, the Convention members stop leading double lives, one in the African Indigenous Religion and culture and the other in the NBC of Zimbabwe. This is done because the NBC of Zimbabwe operates within a certain culture of people. The Shona and Ndebele cultures are part of the cultural environment within which the NBC of Zimbabwe operates. Because of this, the African culture is considered in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies as a way of keeping culture so that the believers would feel that their culture is not ignored. If ever they find their cultures not accommodated, they would consult witchdoctors and diviners in private.
2. The NBC of Zimbabwe has to a certain extent inculturated some aspects of Shona and Ndebele culture in her marriage rituals. She has inculturated payment of lobola, marrying a person with a cultural background known as well as the incorporating guidance and counselling. Ululating, dancing and giving of gifts are some of the cultural practices adopted. However, the NBC of Zimbabwe has not inculturated ancestor veneration, polygamy and divination. Polygamy has not

been inculturated although it is biblical. It is scriptural because some holy men like Abraham, David and Solomon were polygamists. Expensive and oppressive cultural practices are not encouraged in the inculturation of marriage rituals.

3. The inculturation of marriage rituals has become a challenge to the NBC of Zimbabwe in a number of ways. Some Baptists become Christians by daylight and yet become ancestor consultants by night. At times, they are not comfortable with the assistance offered by the NBC of Zimbabwe. Consequently, they often consult the ancestors and diviners under the cover of darkness in fear of other Christians and church authorities.

4. The inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe has been hindered by numerous constraints. For instance, some of the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices have been regarded as not scriptural, outdated, expensive and oppressive. Also some members do not know the reasons why certain cultural practices like the *kusungira* ritual are observed. Some of the NBC of Zimbabwe members feared the danger of syncretism.

5. The NBC of Zimbabwe is composed of a number of different tribes like the Venda, Sotho, Kalanga, Tonga, Ndebele and Shona, who may want their cultural practices to be incorporated in the inculturation of marriage rituals. Since the Convention is composed of members with different cultural backgrounds, it becomes a challenge to adopt the cultural marriage values of only the Shona and Ndebele people. Each group represented would then want to be catered for.

6. The NBC of Zimbabwe expects a man and woman to dedicate themselves to each other completely and unconditionally before they come together as husband and wife. African culture perceives getting married as a gradual process and it is not easy to assess at what juncture the African marriage becomes a marriage in the Christian sense. In African culture, marriage is not reversible and has a definite objective. Certain conditions should be met in the African marriage like the bride price and the birth of a child.

7. Parents or guardians of the bride are important in the inculturation of marriage rituals because the parents' consent is important during the conduct of any wedding ceremony. Along with this, NBC of Zimbabwe expects members who have wedded through Shona and Ndebele traditional customary ways to wed again in the church.

8. The commercialised bride price has become a challenge to the NBC of Zimbabwe. The lobola arrangements are becoming more and more commercialised and are being increasingly abused.

Charging exorbitant lobola has become an obstacle to canonical marriage because of the high price demanded by the bride's family. Purity Malinga, at a research meeting of the Faculty of Theology and Religion at Unisa, declared that lobola is one of the reasons for violence against black women. This is because it reduces women to the property of men (Landman (2000:185). Commenting on that, Kobo (2016) remarks that when Purity Malinga gave such a statement the black men in the meeting, accused her of using feminism to divide black into male and female. This shows that some black women theologians are against the payment of lobola. This makes the payment of lobola a controversial issue.

9. The traditional ritual of paying the bride price is significant in the inculturation of marriage rituals. According to Mangena and Ndlovu (2013:475), in traditional Ndebele marriage, before the children were born, the bride's father paid more than the groom's father did, in the establishment of the new family. For example, he gave his daughter a beast to take to her new home. In this case, the beast is a sign to the groom's family that the bride is serious about marriage. This beast becomes the foundation of the home as it multiplies.

10. The initiation rituals play a significant role of guiding and counselling the youths. Therefore, there is a need for them to be accepted. This also helps in that they reduce the rate of divorce in the church, community and nation. Thus, they should be encouraged because they are full of good morals and respect. For instance, before the conduct of a wedding ceremony a bridal shower party was conducted for a bride-to-be, whilst a bachelor's party was held for a groom-to-be in the NBC of Zimbabwe. In those parties, they were guided and counselled on marriage issues. In this case, the aunts and uncles would guide and counsel the bride and groom, before proceeding with their marriage preparations. Good morals are also cultivated among the youths through preaching and teaching as well.

11. Some Shona and Ndebele cultural rituals compromise Christian doctrines. For instance, the Shona people conduct the *kusungira* ritual. The Ndebele believers conduct such a ritual although under a different name. This allows the mother of the pregnant woman time to monitor her daughter during the last months of her pregnancy. The pregnant woman was guided and counselled on how to handle the newly born baby. This was done since it would be the first time for that woman to give birth. However, according to the doctrinal beliefs of the NBC of Zimbabwe during the conduct of such a ritual, there should be no use of herbs on the mother to open the birth canal. The Convention believes in a God who is all- powerful, omniscient and omnipresent. Again, on

the newly born baby, the NBC of Zimbabwe prohibits application of traditional medicines as a way of protecting the baby. For instance, I noted in chapter 4 that the Shona people would do *kurapa nhova*, whereby they smear some traditional medicine on the head and the navel of the baby. At times, some Shona and Ndebele believers would tie some charms around the waist and the neck of the baby as a form of protection. In Ndebele language the charms are called *intebe*. This is strongly against the NBC of Zimbabwe's doctrine of believing in an Almighty God who is omnipotent and omniscient. The National Executive Committee should come up with policies that discourage the conduct of such activities in the Convention.

12. On perception of the promotion of the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe, I established that the questionnaire, interview and observation results have two varied positions. I observed that the majority of leaders/members believe that the inculturation of marriage rituals should be promoted in the church, whilst a few were saying that it should not be promoted at all. The majority of the population sample from the questionnaire results was in favour of the inculturation of marriage rituals.

7.4 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, I came up with the following recommendations, to expedite the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe to bring them into line with the Shona and Ndebele cultures:

1. Firstly, the National Executive Committee members, pastors, elders, deacons and church committee members of the NBC of Zimbabwe should encourage the payment of the bride price called *roora* in Shona language and *lobola* in Ndebele language. No one should be encouraged to marry in the NBC of Zimbabwe before paying part of or the whole bride price as demanded by the in-laws. Such a stance is in line with Genesis 34:12 and Exodus 22:17. Payment is an exhibition of love, which exhibits great commitment of the bride and groom to marriage. The attachment of a value to the woman is a way of according a status, which is commendable, even in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals.

2. The NBC of Zimbabwe leaders should encourage the groom and relatives to appreciate the parents or guardians for bringing up the wife-to-be in the inculturation of marriage rituals. This is through the payment of two beasts, one for the mother-in-law and one for the father-in-law. However, the beasts are not to be dedicated to the ancestral spirits, since that would be against the NBC of Zimbabwe Christian doctrines of worshipping God through Jesus Christ.

3. The commercialised bride price has become a challenge to the NBC of Zimbabwe. The lobola arrangements are becoming more and more commercialised and are being increasingly abused. Charging exorbitant lobola has become an obstacle to canonical marriage because of the high price demanded by the bride's family. Given such a scenario, in the inculturation of marriage rituals the NBC of Zimbabwe should discourage the abuse of bride price payment.

4. The NBC of Zimbabwe National Executive Committee members, pastors, elders, deacons and church committee members should also encourage the traditional ritual of paying the bride price, since it is a noble idea. I noted before, that before the children were born, the bride's father paid more than the groom's father did, in the establishment of the new family. For example, he gave his daughter a beast to take to her new home. In this case, the beast will be a sign to the groom's family that the bride is serious about marriage. This beast becomes the foundation of the home as it multiplies. As such, I recommend the NBC of Zimbabwe leaders to encourage such a noble idea. But in the case of urban families there might not have a place to keep cattle, and if the gift takes the form of cars and cell phones, it will not multiply but just depreciate in value. More so, if there is intermarriage between Shonas and Ndebeles, the Shonas may misinterpret the procedure accusing the bride and in-laws of being desperate for marriage. Suppose one beast in the herd of the groom's family dies unceremoniously, the family may suspect that their in-laws sent a curse through the bride's beast. In view of this, National Executive Committee members, pastors, elders and deacons are implored to guide and counsel the Shona in-laws on the significance of such a procedure.

5. Shona and Ndebele initiation rituals play a significant role of guiding and counselling the youths. Therefore, there is a need for them to be accepted. This also helps in that they reduce the rate of divorce in the church, community and nation. Thus, they should be promoted because they are full of good morals and respect. However, this may not fit in some Zimbabwean homes where some people including the bride's aunts and groom's uncles may be living in the Diaspora. Therefore, I recommend that the pastors, elders, deacons and youth leaders should help in initiating couple. The National Executive committee members, pastors, elders and even deacons should promote the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices that uphold good morals and respect in the inculturation of the marriage rituals. Such cultural practices preserve *Ubuntu / unhu/ vumunhu*. The pastors, elders, deacons and the youth advisors should continue guiding and counselling to the congregants. This can be done especially during church services, youth meetings and conferences. This can as well be done during the conduct of bridal showers and bachelor's parties, especially in preparations of

wedding ceremonies. What they would be doing strongly complements the role of the aunts and uncles in the Shona and Ndebele cultures. This in some way may reduce cultural conflicts within the NBC of Zimbabwe. Such rituals should be entreated because they help in producing an authentic African Christian church.

6. Some of the parents and the relatives of the bride and groom practise veneration of ancestral spirits in privacy, since they are aware that the NBC of Zimbabwe does not condone such rituals. The NBC of Zimbabwe shuns ancestor veneration and consultation of diviners. The NBC of Zimbabwe should make policies, which adopt and promote all the cultural practices that are in line with the Christian doctrines. Anything against the Christian Bible is should not be condoned without justification. This as well preserves the Shona and Ndebele cultural practices. As such, there is need for a conservative African Theology to try to determine ways and means of accommodating such aspects of ancestor veneration.

7. Whilst some members asserted that one could marry and pay lobola any time of the year including November, others were strongly against such a position, which shows that this is a controversial matter within the NBC of Zimbabwe and could be the cause of conflicts and divisions within the church. Therefore, the NBC of Zimbabwe is encouraged to strongly preach, teach and advise on such issues in relation to the inculturation of marriage rituals. The National Executive Committee, pastors, elders and deacons should craft a policy regarding such controversial issues.

8. The Pastors, elders and deacons of the NBC of Zimbabwe are encouraged to uphold with caution practices of the Shona and Ndebele cultural rituals that compromise the Christian doctrines. For instance, the Shona people conduct the *kusungira ritual*. According to the doctrinal beliefs of the NBC of Zimbabwe during the conduct of such a ritual, there should be no use of herbs on the mother to open the birth canal. The Convention believes in a God who is all-powerful, omniscient and omnipresent. Again, on the newly born baby, the NBC of Zimbabwe prohibits application of traditional medicines as a way of protecting the baby. This is against the NBC of Zimbabwe's doctrine of believing in an Almighty God who is omnipotent and omniscient. The National Executive Committee should come up with policies that discourage the conduct of such activities in the Convention.

9. Since, the NBC of Zimbabwe is composed of many cultural groups I recommend the Convention to inculturate good and biblical cultural practices from each culture so that all the members may feel at home. In addition, the National Executive Committee members, pastors, elders, and deacons

should learn and appreciate the marriage cultural practices of congregants within the shortest period. They should even engage services of people of that cultural extraction. Therefore, inculturation of marriage rituals should be open to everyone so that fears are removed from the congregants, since culture is dynamic and people are living in a global village. Above all, the NBC of Zimbabwe instead of being dogmatic, should be able to cater for a multi-cultural set-up of the Venda, Sotho, Ndebele, Shona, Shangaan and Kalanga people. The NBC of Zimbabwe members should continue upholding adopted Shona and Ndebele cultural practices that are biblical and are in line with the constitution of the Convention.

10. The NBC of Zimbabwe leaders are implored to combine their church wedding ceremony with that of the Shona and Ndebele traditional type. This would enable the couple not to incur heavy costs of having two different ceremonies especially during hard times. Moreover, I would urge the NBC of Zimbabwe elders and deacons to continue with their roles of accompanying a bride-to-be and groom-to-be to the in-laws whenever they are preparing for the marriage and church wedding ceremonies. This ensures that what is not biblical is not brought into the inculturation of marriage rituals, for example virginity testing done by the Kalanga father-in-laws in the Matabeleland region.

11. The NBC of Zimbabwe National Executive Committee members, pastors, elders and deacons are encouraged to preach and teach against views that perpetuate the subordination and separation of males from females in a patriarchal society. These actually subjugate women and deprive them of their self-worth. The positive images of women in Shona and Ndebele religions of the world should be promoted. Policies should be crafted to deal with such matters. The traditional forms of the oppressive and one side-dominated approach, which arise from patriarchal religions, are not to be condoned.

12 Finally, I urge the NBC of Zimbabwe National Executive Committee members, pastors, elders, deacons and church committee members to craft policies that promote the inculturation of marriage rituals. This would make the members not to become Christians by daylight and yet consult ancestors by night.

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ii) Interviews

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Shona culture

Questionnaire for National Executive members, Pastors, Elders, Deacons, church committee members and lay in line with Shona Culture.

Introduction

I am a Doctoral student with UNISA (University of South Africa) conducting a research on Towards the inculturation of marriage rituals in the National Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe: A missiological critique.

The purpose and objectives of the research study are to unearth the type of missiology of inculturation that could help expedite greater commitment and inculturation of marriage rituals between the NBC of Zimbabwe and Shona cultures. The aspects of the Shona cultures that have been fused and their causes will be determined. The possible benefits and barriers to these traits shall as well be examined. Above all, the respondents' perceptions on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the church shall be clearly scrutinised.

Please note that permission has been obtained from the President of the church to research from members of the NBC of Zimbabwe. See the attached letter.

Please assist me by responding to the questions in the questionnaire below:

.....

Please do not include your name on any part of the questionnaire. Your response will be treated as confidential strictly.

Thank you in advance.

Please kindly indicate your honest opinion to each question on this questionnaire.

Section A

Demographic data

1. Sex male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age 20-29 ☐

30-39 ☐

40-49 ☐

50-59 ☐

60-69 ☐

70-79 ☐

3. Position National Executive member ☐

Pastor ☐

Elder ☐

Deacon ☐

Church committee member ☐

Lay ☐

4. Experience in years as a

National Executive member ☐

Pastor ☐

Elder ☐

Deacon ☐

Church committee member ☐

Lay ☐

5. Highest Academic qualification

ZJC	<input type="checkbox"/>
O-level/Grade 11	<input type="checkbox"/>
A-Level	<input type="checkbox"/>
BA /BSc degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
MA / MSc/MBA degree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PhD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Any other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

6. Highest professional Qualification

Teacher Education Certificate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Technical National Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher Education Diploma	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Technical National Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>
B Ed/BCom	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEd	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graduate Certificate in Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
PhD	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

7. How long have you been in the NBC of Zimbabwe?

1-10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11-20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21-30 years.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section B

8. Was there any use of the Shona cultural marriage practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies at the time you became a member? Tick on the appropriate answer.

Yes ☐ No ☐

9. What roles do you think the Shona culture can play in the NBC of Zimbabwe in line with marriage rituals?

i.
.....

ii.
.....

iii.
.....

10. Which Shona marriage cultural practices you know have been adopted in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies?

i.
.....

ii.
.....

iii.
.....

11. Why do you think some features of the Shona marriage cultural practices were incorporated in the running of NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals? Explain your answers.

i.
.....
.....

ii.....
.....
.....

iii.....
.....
.....

12. Which are the possible benefits of blending Shona marriage cultural practices with those of the NBC of Zimbabwe in the running of church marriage ceremonies?

i.....
.....

ii.....
.....

iii.....
.....

13.Explain the constraints to the inclusion of some Shona marriage cultural practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe's marriage ceremonies

i.....
.....
.....

ii.....
.....
.....

iii.....
.....
.....

14. What is your opinion on the fact that Shona marriage cultural practices should be promoted in the running of marriage rituals in the National Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe churches? Explain your answers.

i.....

.....

ii.....

.....

iii.....

.....

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Ndebele culture.

Questionnaire for National Executive members, Pastors, Elders, Deacons, church committee members and lay in line with Ndebele Culture

Introduction

I am a Doctoral student with UNISA (University of South Africa) conducting a research on Towards the inculturation of marriage rituals in the National Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe: A missiological critique.

The purpose and objectives of the research study are to unearth the type of missiology of inculturation that could help expedite greater commitment and inculturation of marriage rituals between the NBC of Zimbabwe and Ndebele cultures. The aspects of the Ndebele cultures that have been fused and their causes will be determined. The possible benefits and barriers to these traits shall as well be examined. Above all, the respondents' perceptions on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the church shall be clearly scrutinised.

Please note that permission has been obtained from the President of the church to research from members of the NBC of Zimbabwe. See the attached letter.

Please assist me by responding to the questions in the questionnaire below:

.....

Please do not include your name on any part of the questionnaire. Your response will be treated as confidential strictly.

Thank you in advance.

Please kindly indicate your honest opinion to each question on this questionnaire.

Section A

Demographic data

1. Sex male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age 20-29 ☐

30-39 ☐

40-49 ☐

50-59 ☐

60-69 ☐

70-79 ☐

3. Position National Executive member ☐

Pastor ☐

Elder ☐

Deacon ☐

Church committee member ☐

Lay ☐

4. Experience in position in years as

National Executive member ☐

Pastor ☐

Elder ☐

Deacon ☐

Church committee member ☐

Lay ☐

5. Highest Academic qualification

ZJC	<input type="checkbox"/>
O-level/Grade 11	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Level	<input type="checkbox"/>
BA /BSc degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
MA / MSc/M B A degree.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PhD	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Highest professional qualification

Teacher Education Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical National Certificate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher Education Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical National Diploma	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B Ed/BCom	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEd	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graduate Certificate in Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
PhD	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

7. How long have you been in the NBC of Zimbabwe?

1-10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11-20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

21-30 years.

☐

Section B

8. Was there any use of the Ndebele cultural marriage practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies at the time you became a member? Tick on the appropriate answer.

Yes ☐

No ☐

9. What roles do you think the Ndebele culture can play in the NBC of Zimbabwe in line with marriage rituals?

i.
.....

ii.
.....

iii.
.....

10. Which Ndebele marriage cultural practices you know have been adopted in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies?

i.
.....

ii.
.....

iii.
.....

11. Why do you think some features of the Ndebele marriage cultural practices were incorporated in the running of NBC of Zimbabwe ceremonies? Explain your answers.

i.....
.....
.....

ii.....
.....
.....

iii.....
.....
.....

12. Which are the possible benefits of blending Ndebele marriage cultural practices with those of the NBC of Zimbabwe in the running of church marriage rituals? Explain your answers.

i.....
.....
.....

ii.....
.....
.....

iii.....
.....
.....

13. Explain the constraints to the inclusion of some Ndebele marriage cultural practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe's marriage ceremonies.

i.....
.....
.....

ii.....
.....
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iii.....

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.....
14. What is your opinion on the fact that Ndebele marriage cultural practices should be promoted in the running of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe churches? Explain your answers.

i.....

.....
.....

ii.....

.....
.....

iii.....

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Appendix 3: Interview guide for Shona culture

Interview guide for National Executive members, Pastors, Elders, Deacons, church committee members and lay in line with Shona Culture.

Introduction

I am a Doctoral student with UNISA (University of South Africa) conducting a research on Towards the inculturation of marriage rituals in the National Baptist Convention: A missiological critique.

The purpose and objectives of the research study are to unearth the type of missiology of inculturation that could help expedite greater commitment and inculturation of marriage rituals between the NBC of Zimbabwe and Shona cultures. The practices of the Shona cultures that have been fused and their causes will be determined. The possible benefits and barriers to these traits shall as well be examined. Above all, your perceptions on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the Convention will also assist me carrying out my study.

Please note that permission has been obtained from the President of the church to research from members of the NBC of Zimbabwe. See the letter I have.

Please assist me by responding genuinely to the questions that I will ask you. Your response will be treated as confidential strictly

Thank you in advance.

.....

Interview questions

1. How long have you been in the NBC of Zimbabwe?

1-10 years.

11-20 years

21-30 years.

2. Was there any use of the Shona cultural marriage practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies at the time you became a member?

3. What roles do you think the Shona culture can play in the NBC of Zimbabwe in line with marriage rituals?

4. Which Shona marriage cultural practices you know have been adopted in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies?

5. Why do you think some features of the Shona marriage cultural practices were incorporated in the running of NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals? Explain your answers.

6. What do think are the possible benefits of blending Shona marriage cultural practices with those of the NBC of Zimbabwe in the running of church marriage ceremonies?

7. Explain the constraints to the inclusion of some Shona marriage cultural practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe's marriage ceremonies.

8. What is your opinion on the fact that Shona marriage cultural practices should be promoted in the running of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe churches? Explain your answers.

Appendix 4: Interview guide for Ndebele culture.

Interview guide for National Executive members, Pastors, Elders, Deacons, church committee members and lay in line with Ndebele Culture.

Introduction

I am a Doctoral student with UNISA (University of South Africa) conducting a research on Towards the inculturation of marriage rituals in the National Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe: A missiological critique.

The purpose and objectives of the research study are to unearth the type of missiology of inculturation that could help expedite greater commitment and inculturation of marriage rituals between the NBC of Zimbabwe and Ndebele cultures. The aspects of the Ndebele cultures that have been fused and their causes will be determined. The possible benefits and barriers to these traits shall as well be examined. Above all, your perceptions on the inculturation of marriage rituals in the Convention will also assist me carrying out my study.

Please note that permission has been obtained from the President of the church to research from members of the NBC of Zimbabwe. See the letter I have.

Please assist me by responding genuinely to the questions that I will ask you. Your response will be treated as confidential strictly

Thank you in advance.

.....

Interview questions

1. How long have you been in the NBC of Zimbabwe?

1-10 years.

11-20 years

21-30 years.

2. Was there any use of the Ndebele cultural marriage practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies at the time you became a member?

3. What roles do you think the Ndebele culture can play in the NBC of Zimbabwe in line with marriage rituals?

4. Which Ndebele marriage cultural practices you know have been adopted in the NBC of Zimbabwe marriage ceremonies?

5. Why do you think some features of the Ndebele marriage cultural practices were incorporated in the running of NBC of Zimbabwe marriage rituals? Explain your answers.

6. What do think are the possible benefits of blending Ndebele marriage cultural practices with those of the NBC of Zimbabwe in the running of church marriage ceremonies?

7. Explain the constraints to the inclusion of some Ndebele marriage cultural practices in the NBC of Zimbabwe's marriage ceremonies.

8. What is your opinion on the fact that Ndebele marriage cultural practices should be promoted in the running of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe churches? Explain your answers.

Appendix 5: Letter to be used for seeking permission.

Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic College

Private Bag 5832

Gwanda

Zimbabwe

03 April 2016

The President

National Baptist Convention

C/O. Pinnacle Baptist Assemblies

18834 Belvedere Rd

Belvedere

Harare

Zimbabwe

Dear Sir

RE: Request for permission to conduct research in church on: Towards the inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe: A missiological critique.

I wish to ask for permission to conduct a research for my Doctoral Thesis in Doctor of Theology in Missiology with University of South Africa (UNISA) in six congregations. Inculturation from a Christian Theological perspective is understood to be a process whereby the faith embodied in one culture, encounters another culture. In this research study it is the National Baptist Convention Christian faith encountering the Shona or Ndebele traditional culture, becoming part and parcel of the new culture in Midlands and Matabeleland regions. Most of the works on the aspect have been done by the Roman Catholic Church or they are on the Roman Catholic Church. No studies have been made in the National Baptist Convention. So this study whose topic is: Towards inculturation

of marriage rituals in the National Baptist Convention: A missiological critique, tries to cover this gap.

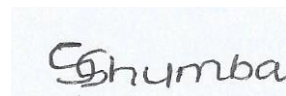
The permission by the National Baptist Convention Executive Office for me to conduct the research is part of the ethical requirements of the University of South Africa, before giving me clearance for my research. I intend to do a research study, whereby I will be distributing questionnaires, observing, and interviewing the National Executive members, Pastors, Elders, Deacons church committee members and lay over a period of one year starting July 2016 to July 2017.

This study affords members of the NBC of Zimbabwe to critically reflect on their practice. There are no known risks to their participation. The researcher will ensure privacy and confidentiality of all participants, and they can withdraw their participation at any stage without any consequences. Identifying data such as participants' church names, addresses and phone numbers will not be collected. Also, there will be no personal payments or reimbursements to participants for participation in this study, I will be happy to provide a copy of a summary of the results upon request.

If you have any questions or concerns before granting me the permission please contact me at Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic College, Private Bag 5832, Gwanda, Zimbabwe, Cell: +263 773 881 713 /+263 713 019 187 or Email:shumbasibiziwe@gmail.com You may also contact my Research Supervisor: Prof C. Landman +278 2377 2574 (landmc@unisa.ac.za), or Co-Supervisor: Dr Z.J. Banda on +271 2429 4377 (bandazj@unisa.ac.za).

Find the attached interview guides.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shumba". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Sibiziwe Shumba (Miss) BA General, BA Special Honours, Grad. C.E., MA Religious Studies, MEd (E.A.P.P.S).

PhD. Student number 55768512.

Appendix 6: Summary sheet for ethical clearance from UNISA.

**APPLICATION FORM FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS
SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY, CHURCH
HISTORY AND MISSIOLOGY**

A. DETAILS OF THE RESEARCHER(S)

A1 Full name AND TITLE of THE PRINCIPAL researcher

SHUMBA SIBIZIWE(MISS)

A2 PERSONAL PARTICULARS OF THE PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER

Student/staff number	55768512
E-mail	55768512@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone number(s)	+263 773 881 713/ +263 713 019 187/ +263 733 838 176
Type of project	Research Thesis for DTh. Degree
Type of funding	None

A3 *HIGHEST Academic and professional qualification*

MA Religious Studies ,MEd in Educational Administration , Planning and Policy Studies

A4 TITLE OF PROPOSED STUDY

Towards inculturation of marriage rituals in NBC of Zimbabwe: A missiological Critique.

A5 PERSONAL PARTICULARS OF Supervisor(s) or PROMOTER(s)

Initials & surname	Prof. C. Landman
Contact details	+278 2377 2574/+271 2429 4309
Department	Christian Spirituality, Church History & Missiology

a. Initials & surname	Dr Z. J. Banda
b. Contact details	012 429 4377/429 4477/Bandazj@unisa.ac.za
c. Department	Christian Spirituality, Church History & Missiology

A6 PERSONAL PARTICULARS OF PROJECT COLLABORATORS

(only for STAFF research projects involving teamwork)

a. Initials & surname	N/A
b. Contact details	N/A
c. Department	N/A

a. Initials & surname	N/A
b. Contact details	N/A
c. Department	N/A

A7 DECLARE ANY POSSIBLE CONFLICT OF INTEREST

(AND HOW THIS WILL BE DEALT WITH)

N/A

B. DETAILS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

NB: This section should not exceed 3000 words

B1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

<p>Inculturation from a Christian theological perspective is understood to be a process whereby the faith embodied in one culture encounters another culture. In this research study, it is the Christian faith message encountering the Ndebele and Shona traditional</p>
--

culture, becoming part and parcel of the new culture in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions.

Most of the work that has been written on inculturation is by the Roman Catholics or they are on the Roman Catholic church. For the Roman Catholic church officials, the objective of inculturation is to make Christianity a religion that is acceptable to all. No studies have been made on the National Baptist Convention.

The research study focuses on inculturation in line with marriage rituals giving a missiological critique of the NBC of Zimbabwe. The researcher attempts to examine and explore the kind of inculturation that could help facilitate greater engagement of inculturation between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele cultures in Midlands and Matabeleland regions. The researcher makes an academic study from within the church. The descriptive survey and multi- case designs are used. Questionnaires, interviews and observations are the research instruments to be employed. Within thirteen congregations, six will be sampled.

In the research study, the type of inculturation that could help expedite greater commitment and inculturation between the NBC of Zimbabwe and Shona and Ndebele cultures shall be unearthed. The aspects of the Shona and Ndebele cultures that have been fused and their causes will be discussed. The barriers to these traits shall as well be examined. Above all, the respondents' perceptions of the respondents on the missiology of inculturation in the church shall be clearly delineated.

B2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Relevant current literature that put the study in proper context were reviewed based on the study objectives and research questions. These include those that deal with the technical aspect of the research for example Kritzinger (2010), Johnson and

Christensen (2010) and others. Works that deal with inculturation distinguishing them from those that deal with enculturation were reviewed. Same applies to those that deal with Africa / Zimbabwe. These include Mawere and Mawere (2010), Shoko (2009), Mutubuki (2007), Nyathi (2005), and Nyathi (2001). Scholars like Anthony (2012), Mwandayi (2011), Kurgat (2009) Magesa (2004), and Amadi (2002), fall under this category as well. Above all literature /church records that deal with the church were studied, for example one written by Quinn (2009). More importantly the gaps in existing literature, were identified since they were focusing on certain localities like Kenya, Mutare and others. Most of these focused on the Roman Catholic Church or they are written by Roman Catholic members. Nothing has been written on the National Baptist Convention. The gaps provided a strong conceptual / theoretical base for the study.

B3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher hinges the study on the inculturation model with cogent and empirical justification. The term inculturation has been defined by some scholars as the term used in Christianity especially in the Roman Catholic Church, denoting to the adaptation of the way church educations are presented to non- Christian cultures and to the influence of those cultures on the development of these lessons. The co-occurrence of Christianity dates back to the Apostolic age. Before his Ascension Jesus inculcated his disciples to spread his lessons to the ends of the church (Matthew 28: verse 18 Mark 16 verse 15), but did not tell them how. Some scholars are of the opinion that in some instances at times, Christianity Christianised the cultures she came into contact with or it was vice versa. As such the researcher seeks to examine if such a model is also put into practice on the issue of marriage rituals in the National

Baptist Convention in line with the Shona and Ndebele cultures. If so, what is the kind of inculturation? A missiological critique is made. I consider the theory appropriate to drive the study in addressing the research problem.

itziB4

B5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the research are to critically critique the type of missiology of inculturation in line with marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe, that could help facilitate greater engagement, and inculturation between the Shona and Ndebele cultures in Midlands and Matabeleland regions. All this is done in order to:

1. Find aspects of Shona and Ndebele cultures that have been fused in the National Baptist Convention.
2. Determine the causes of this infusion in the given church.
3. Explore the possible benefits of such facets in that church.
4. Identify barriers to these features.
5. Examine perceptions of respondents to the characteristics.

B7 RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Population

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008:224) a population, sometimes called a target population, is a set of all people involved. It is basically the large group to which the researcher wants to generalise her sample results. This then shows that it is that group from which the researcher is interested in gaining information and drawing conclusions of

inculturation. Thus a population of this research study is a collection of all church congregations that are well established in the National Baptist Convention in Zimbabwe in Midlands and Matabeleland regions. This covers Gwanda, Bulawayo, Victoria Falls and Gweru areas. The population will be from thirteen congregations within these regions situated in rural and urban areas. In this case, all pastors, elders, deacons, church committee members, the Executive Committee members and even the ordinary congregates of the church are covered.

Sample

Johnson and Christensen (2008:223) define a sample as a set of elements taken from a larger population according to certain rules. This indicates that a sample is a selected set of people drawn from a larger population. In this research study the sample consists of six established congregations from the larger group of the NBC of Zimbabwe. This shall be composed of one from Gwanda, four from Bulawayo and one from Gweru. A purposive sampling technique will be used to select the participants who will assist in determining the type of inculturation that could help enable greater engagement and inculturation between the NBC of Zimbabwe and the Shona and Ndebele cultures.

B8 GENERATION METHOD(S) AND PROCEDURE(S)

The research will be conducted in the following manner:

1. In this research study, the multi-case design combined with the descriptive survey shall be used. Primary and secondary literature sources will be consulted to critique the current inculturation in line with marriage rituals, of the NBC of Zimbabwe.
2. Interview approximately 10 interviewees and 125 questionnaires shall be filled by pastors, elders, deacons, committee members, the lay and National Executive Committee members of the NBC of Zimbabwe. Observations shall be continuous in the research study. This helps in getting their experiences.
3. Evaluate the present understanding and practices of the Church in the light of the experiences of the participants.
4. Offer a renewed understanding of the missiology of inculturation in the NBC of Zimbabwe.

B9 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Data analysis

Data is useless unless it is analysed. It will be analysed in the form of statistical data like the mean, modes, and standard deviation. In this case numerical figures are used since the research study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. In analysing data even, the thick narrative descriptions will be used to analyse data collected through open –ended responses from questionnaires and interviews. In this case the researcher uses SPSS to analyse qualitative data, whilst she uses MS word for transcriptions of the qualitative data on inculturation of marriage rituals.

Data presentation procedures

Certain procedures have to be undertaken in order to make data presentable. Data will be presented in different forms. Percentages, frequencies, pie charts and tables will be used. Presenting data in this manner makes it clear and easy to interpret and compare. However, it may be a difficult task to draw instruments that would produce data to measure elusive factors like attitude and beliefs shown by open –ended responses.

C. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

C1 HOW SHOULD THIS STUDY BE CHARACTERISED?

(Please tick all appropriate boxes.)

Personal and social information collected directly from participants

YES ✓	NO
---------------------	-----------

Identifiable information to be collected about people from private or restricted records (e.g. medical records, staff records, student records, membership records, etc.)

YES	NO ✓
------------	--------------------

Other data collection method(s) that may impact on the anonymity or privacy of participants

YES	NO ✓
------------	--------------------

If the answer to the last question is ‘yes’, please supply details

N/A

C2 WHAT IS THE AGE RANGE OF POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS FOR THE PROPOSED RESEARCH?

20 TO 80 YEARS OF AGE.

C2.1 If the potential participants are 18 years and older, describe the process to obtain informed consent from them. Attach copies of the introductory letter and informed consent form.

I will approach the Office of the President for permission to conduct the interviews with pastors and departments of the NBC of Zimbabwe. This is done even for the questionnaires to be filled and observations to be made. Above all I shall obtain the letter of consent which will be sent to each participant. (Attached as Appendix 1)

1. I will approach the key persons of the NBC of Zimbabwe in Midlands and Matabeleland regions, in which participants will be interviewed, given questionnaires and observed to inform them of the project and to ask for their recommendations of partakers to be used.
2. I will telephonically and electronically approach each candidate for their consent to participate in the project and to be interviewed. In that approach each person will be fully informed as to the scope, goal and expectations of participation; the intended outcome of the project; their contribution; the reason why each person has been approached and how their participation would be valued.
3. A copy of the proposed topics for discussion and standardized questions will be forwarded to each participant. (Attached as Appendix 3) The important matters of anonymity of each participant and the confidentiality of data will be discussed with the participants. A copy of the consent form that will be signed by each participant and me at the interview will be forwarded to each participant (Attached as Appendix 1).
4. Permission will be sought to record and transcribe, analyse and utilize that data for research and publication purposes. The findings from the interviews, questionnaires and observations will be made available to the participants, in electronic format, for their information and an opportunity to raise any matters of concern before being incorporated into the final analysis of the research project.

B

- C2.2** If the proposed participants are younger than 18 years, are consent and assent forms attached? (In order for minors – younger than 18 years – to participate in a research study, parental or guardian permission must be obtained. In the case of minors, a youth assent form is also required.)

YES	NO	N/A
------------	-----------	------------

- C3** DESCRIBE THE NATURE OF RISKS POSED BY THE PROPOSED RESEARCH WHICH PARTICIPANTS MAY/WILL SUFFER. ALSO INDICATE THE LEVEL OF RISK FOR PARTICIPANTS (Please consider any discomfort, pain/physical or psychological problems/side-effects, persecution, stigmatisation or negative labelling.)

N/A

- C4** DESCRIBE THE STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN CASE OF ADVERSE EVENTS OR WHEN INJURY OR HARM IS EXPERIENCED BY POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

N/A

- C5** DESCRIBE THE PROCESS (AND AMOUNTS) OF COMPENSATION TO BE PAID, INCLUDING REIMBURSEMENTS, GIFTS OR SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO PARTICIPANTS (IF APPLICABLE) (Will potential participants incur financial costs by participating in the proposed study? Will there be any incentives to be given to potential participants for participation in this proposed study?)

N/A

- C6** DESCRIBE ARRANGEMENTS FOR INDEMNITY (IF APPLICABLE)

Not Applicable

- C7** IF THE RESEARCH WILL TAKE PLACE IN COUNTRIES OTHER THAN SOUTH AFRICA, LIST ALL THE COUNTRIES HERE. (Is it necessary to obtain permission from any authorities to do research in another country? If applicable, is the relevant documentation attached?)

ZIMBABWE. PERMISSION HAS BEEN SOUGHT FROM THE CHURCH. SEE THE ATTACHED LETTERS OF REQUEST AND PERMISSION.

C8 IF THE RESEARCH WILL TAKE PLACE IN PUBLIC INSTITUTION(S), e.g. clinics, schools, hospitals, churches, LIST THEM HERE AND SPECIFY THE NATURE OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT.

ONE GWANDA CONGREGATION, 4 BULAWAYO CONGREGATIONS AND 1 GWERU CONGREGATION. THE MEMBERS SHALL FILL IN QUESTIONNAIRES, BE INTERVIEWED AND BE OBSERVED AS WELL.

C9 IF YOU LISTED (AN) INSTITUTION(S) IN C8, ATTACH PROOF OF PERMISSION GRANTED BY THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES FOR RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED IN EACH INSTITUTION

SEE THE ATTACHED LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICE IN LINE WITH PERMISSION.

D. RESEARCH WHICH MAY PUT A RESEARCHER, COLLABORATORS OR FIELD WORKERS AT RISK

D1 HOW SHOULD THE RISK BE CHARACTERISED?

Research undertaken in a politically unstable area	YES	NO ✓
Research involving sensitive cultural or religious issues	YES	NO ✓
Research in countries where criticism of government and institutions may put researchers or field workers at risk	YES	NO ✓
Other data collection method that may impact negatively on the researcher/field worker	YES	NO ✓

If the answer to the last question is 'yes', please supply details:

N/A

D2 Is A LETTER OF COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL PRACTICE IN COLLECTING AND MANAGING DATA ATTACHED, SIGNED BY EACH FIELD WORKER?

YES	NO	N/A
-----	----	-----

D3 DESCRIBE THE NATURE OF THE RISKS THAT THE PROPOSED RESEARCH MAY POSE TO YOU AND YOUR COLLABORATORS/FIELD WORKERS. ALSO INDICATE THE LEVEL OF RISK (Please consider any discomfort, pain/physical or psychological problems/side-effects, persecution, stigmatisation or negative labelling, etc.)

N/A

D4 DESCRIBE THE STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN CASE OF ADVERSE EVENTS OR WHEN INJURY OR HARM IS EXPERIENCED BY A COLLABORATOR/FIELD WORKER THAT IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED RESEARCH.

N/A

D5 DECLARE THE AMOUNTS OF COMPENSATION (INCLUDING REIMBURSEMENTS, GIFTS OR SERVICES) TO BE PROVIDED TO FIELDWORKERS (IF APPLICABLE) (Will field workers incur financial costs by participating in the proposed study? Will any incentives be given to field workers for participation in this proposed study?)

N/A

D6 DESCRIBE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR INDEMNITY OF FIELD WORKERS (Keep the relevant documentation safe, as this could be required at some later stage)

N/A

D7 LIST ALL PREVIOUS ETHICS REVIEW APPLICATIONS THAT YOU HAVE SUBMITTED TO ETHICS REVIEW BODIES

N/A

E. LIST OF REFERENCES:

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F. PROJECT TIME FRAME

Research proposal	By end of December2015
Chapter 1	By end of April 2016
Chapter 2	By end of July 2016

Chapter 3	By end of October 2016
Chapter 4	By end of January 2017
Chapter 5	By end of April 2017
Chapter 6	By end July 2017
Chapter 7	By end of October 2017
Submission of first draft	By end of December 2017
Final draft	By end of March 2018
Bound copies	By end of April 2018

G. CANDIDATE’S STATEMENT AGREEING TO COMPLY WITH THE ETHICAL PRINCIPLES SET OUT IN UNISA’S POLICY ON RESEARCH ETHICS

I SHUMBA SIBIZIWE..... (Name of applicant) declare that I have read the policy for research ethics of UNISA and that this form is a true and accurate reflection of the methodological and ethical implications of the proposed study. I shall carry out the study in strict accordance with the approved proposal and the ethics policy of UNISA. I shall maintain the confidentiality of all data collected from or about research participants, and maintain security procedures for the protection of privacy. I shall record the way in which the ethical guidelines as suggested in the proposal has been implemented in this research. I shall work in close collaboration with my program managers and shall notify them in writing immediately if any change to the study is proposed. I undertake to notify the Higher Degrees Committee in writing immediately if any adverse event occurs or when injury or harm is experienced by the participants attributable to their participation in the study.

H. SIGNATURE(S) OF RESEARCHER(S)

**Signature of principal
researcher:**

Ghumba

Date:

06 April 2016

**Signature(s) of project
collaborator(s) (in case of
team research)**

Date:

Appendix 7: Circular showing dismissal of five churches from the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe



BAPTIST CONVENTION OF ZIMBABWE

P.O.Box 585
Gweru

14 October 1988

From: Executive Secretary
To: All Baptist Pastors, B.C.Z. Member Churches and Fellowships.
Subject: CIRCULAR TO INFORM BAPTIST PASTORS, CHURCHES AND FELLOWSHIPS
ABOUT THE NEED TO ENGAGE IN BAPTIST PRACTICES AS OPPOSED TO
NEO-PENTECOSTAL PRACTICES.

Beloved in the Lord, Baptist Pastors, Churches and Fellowships.

Greetings in the most precious name of our wonderful Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Brethren, it has become known that some of our member Churches and organisations have espoused neo-pentecostal practices. We cannot tell whether those involved are doing this by design or unawares. But perhaps some of you are wondering as to what these neo-pentecostal practices being referred to are, and what makes them be cause for alarm. Look closely at the following two paragraphs taken from the Book entitled The Holy Spirit and Christian Experience by Mack B. Stokes.

"The charismatic movement, which emphasizes spiritual gifts, has come to visibility more recently in so-called Neo-Pentecostalism, which is Pentecostalism within the traditional churches. This is a movement of small groups within the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, which share in pentecostal experiences.

As is well known, these groups emphasize "baptism in the Spirit" and the consequent charismatic, or "special" gifts of the Spirit. In addition to the primary christian virtues-- faith, hope and love -- they insist that those who experience "baptism in the Spirit" are endowed by the Holy Spirit with special gifts of speaking in tongues, of healing, of discernment and of power to recognize and exorcise demons."

Further to the above, their belief on the atonement is that; Just as much as Jesus died for our sins, he died for our diseases (physical healing), and hence those who hold this position will hunt for the physically sick. This position is not taught in the word of God, that is when one studies it in its context, but since those who hold this position are only eager to proof text their position, they do not fail to find texts they can twist, give meaning and interpret out of context. The main and outstanding neo-pentecostal practices are;

1. Mass prayer
2. Speaking in tongues
3. Holding healing services
4. Demon hunting

Let it be understood that Baptists will not turn away the sick, but

Baptists will not hunt for the sick either. If in a Church Service someone comes up and requests to be prayed for, Baptists will pray for that person. If someone is at home and sends word to Pastor or deacon requesting to be prayed for, he will be prayed for.

There is a difference between Baptist Beliefs and Practices and neo-pentecostal beliefs and practices. Neo-pentecostals will seek to infiltrate an established denomination, such as the Baptist with foreign (pentecostal) practices, with the intention of eventually changing it from inside. In some cases they (neo-pentecostals) employ unchristian and unethical means to achieve their desired end.

Now, on October 11 & 12, 1988 when the Executive Committee of the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe was in session, having a called meeting, agreed that those churches which engage in neo-pentecostal practices cannot remain members of the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe, and thus the E.C. encourages all member Baptist Churches to engage in Baptist practices and teach the same to their members. Churches which cease to uphold the doctrines and objects of the Convention cannot remain members.

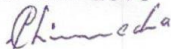
Should there be an individual, a group of individuals or organization which should feel that the neo-pentecostal way is the way to go, be it noted and understood that that individual, group of individuals or organization cannot engage in these practices in a Baptist Church, or Churches. Thus, those who engage in these practices will need to leave Baptist Churches and go meet under trees or other structures not Baptist. As Baptists, let our churches be truly Baptist and not Baptistical or neo-pentecostal.

It is my sincere hope that you will understand this circular for what it is meant; an encouragement to Baptist Convention Churches to uphold and cherish our Baptist Faith and Practice and as member Churches of the Convention, to remain faithful in upholding our Baptist doctrines and objects as stated in the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe constitution.

Please fill in the coupon below and mail to the above address without delay, at the latest by November 15, 1988.

Once again, thank you for your cooperation and support and may the Lord bless you richly.

In His love



L.Chimedza

.....
Name and Address of Church _____

Name of Pastor _____

Tick statement which indicates your position as a church on the above matter.

_____ We pledge our faithfulness to uphold the doctrines and objects of the Convention.

_____ We do not pledge to uphold the doctrines and objects of the Convention.

Appendix 8: Letter from Mkoba 6 Baptist church resisting the dismissal.

Mkoba Baptist Church
P.O.Box MK 7,
Mkoba, Gweru
23rd October, 1988.

The Executive Secretary
Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe
P.O.Box 585,
Gweru

Re: REMOVAL OF MKOKA BAPTIST CHURCH FROM BAPTIST CONVENTION OF ZIMBABWE
MEMBERSHIP.

Dear Sir,

In response to your letter dated 17th October 1988 on the above mentioned subject we wish to express our utmost bewilderment to the unconstitutional manner in which the E.C. supposedly dismembered us from the B.C.Z.

As per the B.C.Z. constitution we remain members because according to the E.C. minutes of the 11th and 12th October 1988 to which you referred us, the E.C. members present at the meeting were nine, but four members out of nine namely Rev. L. Payne, Rev. G. Mkalala, Mr. E. Chingono and Rev. P.F. Moyo had left the room by the time the motion was deliberated upon and passed. The remaining five members who did not constitute a quorum according to Article 9 paragraph 8 of BCZ constitution which reads "at any meeting of the National Executive there shall be not less than 8 members".

then went ahead and dismembered us.

However, we wish to bring to the attention of the "E.C", Article II paragraph I of the BCZ constitution which reads:

"The Convention recognizes the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as the Head of His Church, and the New Testament as the sole authority in all matters pertaining to Faith and religious doctrine. Each church has under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the liberty to interpret the teachings and administer the spiritual laws of the New Testament".

In view of the foregoing points contained in this letter, MKOKA BAPTIST CHURCH declares the dismembership quoted in your letter null and void.

Yours In His Love and Service,

Shukhala Church Secretary,

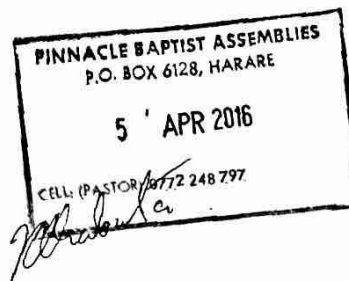
cc. President BCZ
Mission Administrator
Mission Support Council
Rev. L. Payne
Rev. G. Mkalala
Rev. C. Chasara
Mr. E. Chingono
Mrs. R. J. Muchechetere
Rev. B.B. Mzokha
Hunyani Baptist Church

Appendix 9: Letter sent to the Executive office seeking permission.

Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic College
Private Bag 5832
Gwanda
Zimbabwe

03 April 2016

The President
National Baptist Convention
C/O. Pinnacle Baptist Assemblies
18834 Belvedere Rd
Belvedere
Harare
Zimbabwe



Dear Sir

RE: Request for permission to conduct research in church on: Towards inculturation of marriage rituals in the National Baptist Convention: A missiological critique.

I wish to ask for permission to conduct a research for my Doctoral Thesis in Doctor of Theology in Missiology with University of South Africa (UNISA) in six congregations. Inculturation from a Christian Theological perspective is understood to be a process whereby the faith embodied in one culture, encounters another culture. In this research study it is the National Baptist Convention Christian faith encountering the Shona or Ndebele traditional culture, becoming part and parcel of the new culture in Midlands and Matabeleland regions. Most of the works on the aspect have been done by the Roman Catholic Church or they are on the Roman Catholic Church. No studies have been made in the National Baptist Convention. So this study whose topic is: Towards inculturation of marriage rituals in the National Baptist Convention: A missiological critique, tries to cover this gap.

The permission by the National Baptist Convention Executive Office for me to conduct the research is part of the ethical requirements of the University of South Africa, before giving me clearance for my research. I intend to do a research study, whereby I will be distributing questionnaires, observing, and interviewing the National Executive members, Pastors, Elders, Deacons church committee members and laity over a period of one year starting July 2016 to July 2017.

This study affords members of the National Baptist Convention to critically reflect on their practice. There are no known risks to their participation. The researcher will ensure privacy and confidentiality of all participants, and they can withdraw their participation at any stage without any consequences. Identifying data such as participants' church names, addresses and phone numbers will not be collected. Also, there will be no personal payments or reimbursements to participants for participation in this study, I will be happy to provide a copy of a summary of the results upon request.

If you have any questions or concerns before granting me the permission please contact me at Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic College, Private Bag 5832, Gwanda, Zimbabwe, Cell: +263 773 881 713 /+263 713 019 187 or Email: shumbasibiziwe@gmail.com You may also contact my Research Supervisor: Prof C. Landman +278 2377 2574 (landmc@unisa.ac.za), or Co-Supervisor: Dr Z.J. Banda on +271 2429 4377 (bandazj@unisa.ac.za).

Find the attached interview guides.

Yours faithfully

Shumba

Sibiziwe Shumba (Miss) B.A. General, B.A. Special Honours, Grad. C.E., M.A. Religious Studies, M.Ed. (E.A.P.P.S).

PhD. Student number 55768512.



Appendix 10: Letter from the Executive office granting permission.



National Baptist Convention
C/O Pinnacle Baptist Assemblies
18834 Belvedere Road
Belvedere, Harare
Zimbabwe
04 April, 2016

Sibiziwe Shumba

Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic College

Private Bag 5832

Gwanda

Zimbabwe

RE: Permission to conduct research in the church on: Towards inculturation of marriage rituals in the National Baptist Convention: A missiological critique.

Dear Sibiziwe Shumba

Reference is made to your letter in which you requested for permission to carry out an educational research on: Towards inculturation of marriage rituals in National Baptist Convention in six congregations.

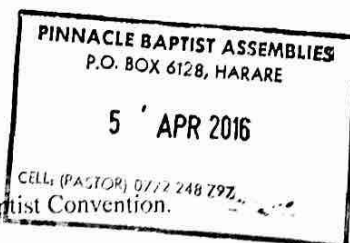
Accordingly be advised that the Head of the National Baptist Convention has granted you permission to carry out the research within the church.

It is hoped that your research will benefit the church. Accordingly it will be appreciated if you could supply the office of the Head of the Church with a final copy of your study, as the findings will be relevant to the church's strategic process.

Yours faithfully

Rev. N.R. Chabata

President of the National Baptist Convention.



Appendix11: Ethical clearance from UNISA.



Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology
University of South Africa
PO Box 392
UNISA 0003

2016-11-18

ETHICAL CLEARANCE FOR THE POST-DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT OF SHUMBA SIBIZIWE: Towards inculturation of marriage rituals in the National Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe: A missiological critique.

The Departmental Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology declares that it assessed the research proposal of SHUMBA SBIZIWE in April 2016 and approved it without reservation. That assessment process included careful scrutiny of the research design and methodology and all the ethical dimensions of the research project of the above-mentioned researcher. We were satisfied that adequate measures were built into the research methodology to respect all the participants and to protect them from harm.

Yours sincerely

Dr ZJ Banda

Chair of Department

Prof TD Mashau

Chairperson of the Departmental Ethical Review Committee



University of South Africa
Pretorius Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

Appendix 12: Informed consent Form.

Consent Form

Towards inculturation of marriage rituals in the NBC of Zimbabwe: A missiological critique.

I,.....
have been informed about the aims of the above research study and hereby agree

To participate in the interviews on the views on: Towards inculturation of marriage rituals in the
NBC of Zimbabwe: A missiological critique.

To be quoted in presentations and publications in this regard under my own name/a pseudonym.

.....

Interviewee

.....

Interviewer

.....

Date

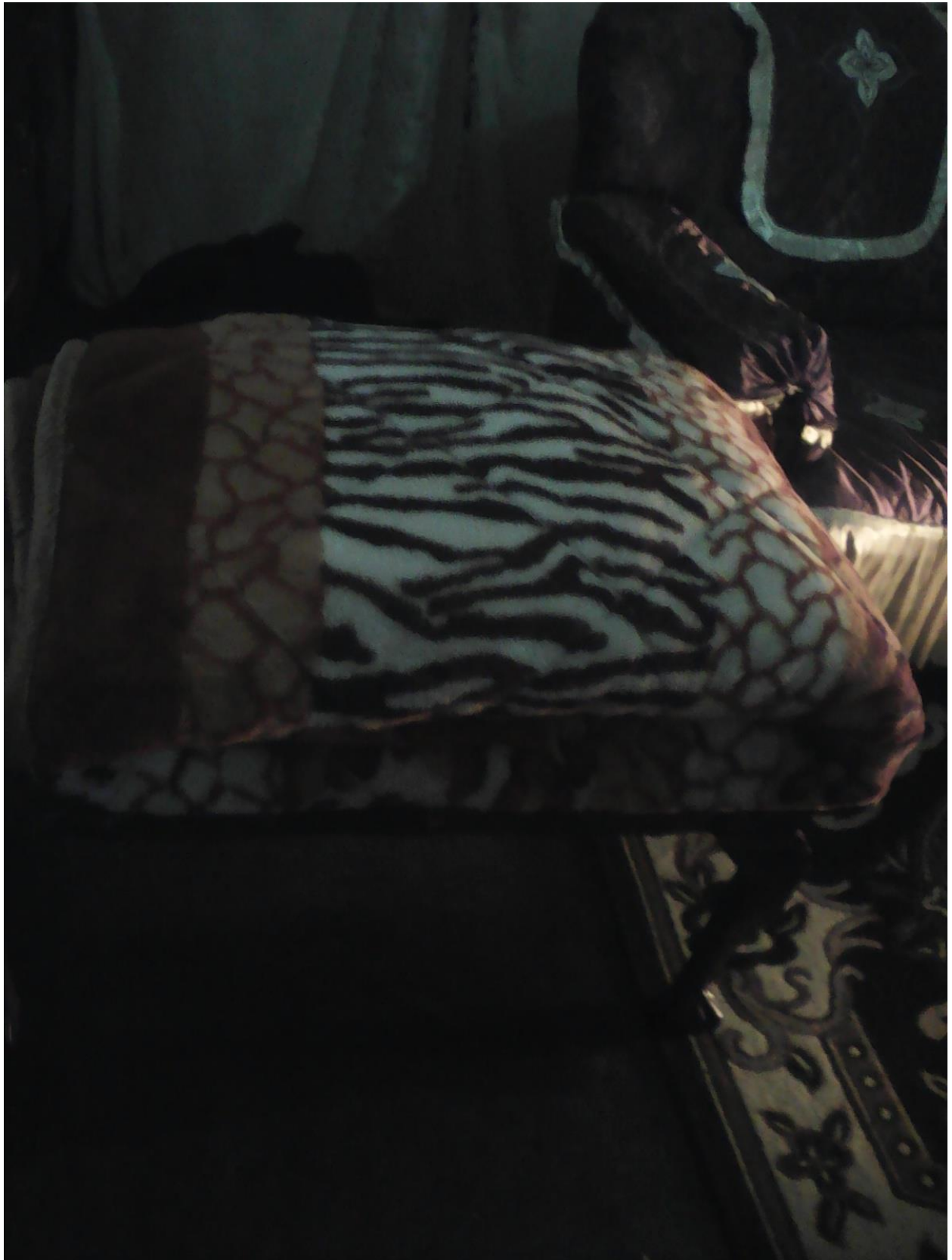
Appendix 13: Picture of the long coat bought at the bride price payment



Appendix 14: Picture of the jug bought at the payment of the bride price



Appendix 15: Picture of the blanket bought as part of the bride price.



Appendix 16: Picture of a couple that wedded on the 13th of November 2016

